













ADVENTURES AMONG WILD BEASTS









### BABOON ATTACKED BY LEOPARD

The baboon soon missed her little one and retraced her steps to try and find it. There was a rustle, and like a thunderbolt a lithe body launched itself from a branch of the very tree behind which the hunters were hiding with the young baboon, and fixed its teeth in the neck of the unfortunate monkey.

# ADVENTURES

AMONG

# WILD BEASTS

ROMANTIC INCIDENTS & PERILS  
OF TRAVEL, SPORT, AND EXPLORATION  
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

BY

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"ADVENTURES IN THE GREAT DESERTS," "ADVENTURES IN THE GREAT  
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WITH TWENTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS

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## PREFACE

THE lives of men who come in conflict with wild beasts, whether in pursuit of gain, or for the protection of life or property, or from a passion for the chase, are full of danger and hardship, but also full of romantic adventures. Their encounters display the marvellous instinct of the animal not less than the courage and resource of the man.

Most of the stories here given fall within the first sixty years of the last century, and for this there is a melancholy reason. In most countries of the world wild beasts have ceased to exist in any large numbers. When forest, desert, and prairie are replaced by town and railway, the former occupants are forced into restricted areas, and the struggle for life is increased tenfold. Wild animals would disappear before advancing civilization, even if man did not interfere more actively and destructively. We look in vain nowadays for the bison, the Asiatic lion, the sable, most kinds of the African rhinoceros, and many other creatures that were plentiful enough in our grandfathers' time.

Somewhat late in the day man is discovering his mis-

## PREFACE

take in having permitted such unreasonable slaughter. In the United States, Yellowstone Park, a corner of Wyoming as large as Yorkshire, has been devoted to the preservation of American fauna. Our own laws wisely protect our fish and birds ; international law has established stringent regulations for sealers and whalers ; and it is to be regretted that a similar arrangement for the protection of the yak, the buffalo, various deer, and other wild animals is scarcely practicable.

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# ADVENTURES AMONG WILD BEASTS

## CHAPTER I

### AMONG THE BEARS OF THE NORTH

Is the bear essentially a carnivorous beast?—The brown bear.—Adventure of a Russian farmer.—The bear as a sheep-stealer.—Shooting at the enemy from a trench.—Pursued and besieged by a bear.—The “collared” or Siberian bear.—Amusing anecdote by Thomas Witlam Atkinson.—Mr. Dobell’s fight with a bear.—Siberian hunters.—The Polar bear.—His disposition.—Reasons therefor.—A plucky sailor-boy.—A she-bear and her cubs pursued.—Her stratagem.—The most awful fate that can befall a Polar bear.

NOTWITHSTANDING the fact that the bear may be found at all four points of the compass, it is with the North that we have learned most to associate him ; and in this chapter we shall discuss only the varieties that are found in Northern Europe and Asia, and in the Polar Regions ; that is to say, the brown bear, with his close relative the “collared” or Siberian bear, and the huge *nennook*, as the Eskimos call him—the white or Polar bear.

From the formation of their teeth, it is evident that bears require, like ourselves, a mixed diet ; and seeing that most of them can well sustain life on other than flesh food, it is not strictly correct to classify them as car-

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nivorous animals. This is an important point, because on it hinges the much-disputed question of the natural ferocity of bears ; and in the present volume we are dealing with wild beasts in their relation to man. We have only to contrast the tiger with the elephant, or the wolf with the bison, to see that an animal which depends on living prey is fiercer, and in a general way more dangerous to man, than one that does not. Similarly, so long as the circumstances of climate and surroundings permit of the bear's being more or less independent of animal food, he is no more dangerous than the wild elephant or bison ; and wherever he has been known to attack man, we may be quite sure that the man, and not the bear, began it.

The Polar bear's disposition, as we shall presently see, is more aggressive, because Nature generally denies him the vegetable food which he may be supposed to crave, and so causes him to choose between hunting and starving. But the brown bear, terrible as he can be as an assailant, asks nothing better than to be allowed to feed on the sweet berries or roots which the Scandinavian or other forests afford him, and to be left alone.

A fact perhaps not generally known about the brown bear is that it is possible for him to acquire a taste for blood and flesh ; and that if he have once habituated himself to that form of diet, nothing short of a bullet will wean him from it. A Russian farmer, who found his livestock mysteriously diminishing in spite of the wolf-traps with which the premises were surrounded, set himself to watch his sheepfold one night. After he had waited for about an hour, he heard a deliberate measured tread coming across the yard, and, to his horror, beheld a full-grown bear that must have weighed anything from a

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quarter to half a ton. Knowing the cowardice of the wolf, he had not troubled to make himself secure from attack, but was merely lurking in the shadow of a high wooden fence. Therefore to fire, armed as he was with only an old-fashioned muzzle-loading gun, would have been madness ; and as the bear evidently had not perceived him, he decided to remain still, and sacrifice the life of a sheep in preference to his own. The marauder reached the row of hurdles that folded the sheep, and, standing on his hind-legs, coolly lifted one of the animals up in his paws and marched off with it.

Following as quietly as he could, and as closely as he dared, the farmer passed out of his yard and on to a narrow patch of grass-land. Arrived here, the bear seemed unable to defer any longer his desire for a meal, and, stopping, he began—so far as the farmer could distinguish in the moonlight—to tear at the skin on the back of his victim's head and neck till the place was raw, and then to suck at the wound as a small boy sucks an orange.

Determined that the brute should not escape him, the ready-witted Russian dropped into a deep, narrow trench that had been dug for drainage purposes, and, taking advantage of the bear's back being turned to him, fired then reloaded as swiftly as his antiquated weapon would allow him. There was a most appalling yell, followed by a series of growls, and the bear dropped the sheep as though under the impression that it had exploded ; then, maddened with pain, began to vent his fury on the lifeless body by tearing it almost to pieces with his claws.

The first shot had been fired from a distance of thirty yards, and the farmer could see that by creeping along his trench he could get nearly ten yards nearer. He did

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so, and, firing again, must have wounded the beast badly somewhere in the back, for he turned sharply towards the trench and half reared, then fell forward again growling, and began to limp slowly, and doubtless with great pain, towards where the farmer was crouching. The Russian once more reloaded his gun. Seeing little to fear in an animal thus crippled, he waited for him to come within a distance of about twelve feet, and fired again. The bear dropped, and the man sprang out of the trench, then turned and fled towards the house ; for the brute, at last catching sight of his tormentor, seemed to gather new strength by virtue of his very rage, and, staggering to his feet again, was making straight at him. The Russian did not stop running till he reached his house, and, on turning to look, he saw that the beast was still plodding patiently on in pursuit.

Following the scent like a foxhound, the bear tracked the fugitive round the house, and, finding himself barred out, threw his weight against the wooden wall, so that the whole house shook. Had he fallen against the door itself, the farmer and his family would have been almost at his mercy, for no bolts or hinges could have withstood such a shock ; and the whole house was but one large room. All night the terrified inmates sat quaking at the reverberating growls outside ; but when daylight came all was still again ; the bear had died on the very threshold from loss of blood.

The collared bear of North Asia, so called from a sort of ring of white hair round its neck, has a character for great ferocity ; but, on the other hand, naturalists have scores of anecdotes which bear witness to strong strains of both gentleness and cowardice in the animal. Thomas



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Witlam Atkinson, the great artist-explorer, vouches for the truth of the following laughable incident : In a Siberian village through which he was travelling, he came across an old woman who passed for a heroine on account of an interview which she had recently had with one of these animals. Her donkey had strayed away, so, arming herself with a stout broom-handle, she went forth in search of him. She sought all the afternoon in vain, and was returning home tired and cross at dusk, when a brown object close at hand moved its head slightly. In her exasperation, the poor old soul made a dash at what she supposed was the donkey, and proceeded to "lay on" right lustily with her broomstick, calling the beast everything that a recreant and refractory ass could in reason be called. But before the fifth stroke had fallen, the "donkey" had increased to about four times his natural proportions, and seemed to threaten to get bigger still ; and the startled old dame found herself face to face with a collared bear. The animal had been lying half hidden by a bush, and in that position might easily be mistaken in the dusk, by a person whose sight was defective, for the truant donkey. Paralyzed with fright, the old lady stood agape, while the bear, probably little less alarmed than she, turned and shuffled away across the steppe.

But Mr. Peter Dobell did not find that these Siberian bears are so easily put to flight. While he was out one day with a party of native hunters, loud screams of terror attracted his attention to a miserable hut a short distance away ; and hastening towards it, he found a bear busily engaged in trying to force open the door, which was being feebly held against him by a man, his wife, and two children. Only the previous night the same, or a similar,

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animal had made off with a horse from the neighbourhood, and it looked remarkably as if the fierce intruder had the same intentions towards some member of this family.

Shouting to his native companions to back him up with their spears, Mr. Dobell fired his first barrel at the brute, and wounded him in the back. In an instant the bear wheeled, and, seeing whence the bullet had proceeded, rushed open-mouthed at the shooter. The natives, if they did not actually flee, kept their distance, and Dobell, well aware that flight would be worse than useless, saw himself fated to meet the danger unaided. Walking backwards as swiftly as his snow-shoes would allow him, he kept his gun at his shoulder, hoping, if not to send a ball through the animal's eye, at least to disable him by a wound in the shoulder.

But at the best of times, and unhampered by snow-shoes, walking backwards is not a method of locomotion to be recommended for its safety ; and just now it almost proved fatal, for as Dobell was about to pause, with a view to making his aim more sure, one shoe caught in the other, and he fell backwards on the frozen snow.

Like lightning he raised himself to a sitting posture, and, devoutly thanking his stars that the gun, which was at full cock, had not gone off, was about to take aim once more, when a dark line whizzed through the air just above his head, and a heavy, iron-headed spear, thrown by one of the natives, caught the bear fairly in the shoulder, penetrating a good three inches. The animal stopped within six feet of where Dobell lay, and, jerking his head round, made an angry snap in the direction of the spear-shaft. At the same moment the Englishman fired, striking the bear in the throat. Belching up blood,



### A NARROW ESCAPE

Dobell was walking backwards with a view of taking a sure aim, when one snowshoe caught in the other, and he fell backwards. Like lightning he raised himself to a sitting position and was about to take aim, when a heavy iron-headed spear whizzed through the air and caught the bear fairly in the shoulder.



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and sinking his roar to a pathetic moan, the beast rolled over, and was dead by the time Dobell had staggered to his feet again.

“Look sharp and skin him,” he cried to his men. “I must have something to remember him by.”

In a moment two of the natives were stooping over the carcass, each occupied in the pleasing operation of digging his knife into the eyes of the dead beast.

“What’s that for, in the name of all that’s disgusting?” demanded the explorer.

“Often the bear comes to life again; therefore we stab him in the eyes, so that, were he to do so, he could not see any of us,” was the sage explanation. And, not content with these precautions, the sagacious natives refused to proceed with the skinning till they had disembowelled the body, by way of making themselves doubly secure. Revolting as such proceedings sound to us, they at least prove one thing: that uncivilized man has been taught by unpleasant experience, in his dealings with wild beasts, to be on his guard against that too easy assurance that has cost many a civilized hunter his life.

Condemned as he is to live upon whatever food he can seize by violence or cunning, and often to go for a couple of days without breaking his fast, it is no wonder that the Polar bear is an exception to the general rule given at the beginning of this chapter. The animals on which he seeks to prey are, more often than not, fitted by Nature to escape him by means of their greater swiftness, as in the case of fish, seals, reindeer, and even musk-oxen; or else, like the walrus, to do battle with him, and often to put him to flight. Not that he is by any means inactive; that, surely, is the last epithet to apply to a beast that



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can catch sea-birds as a cat catches sparrows ; that can dive, swim, and fish like any cormorant ; and that can get over the ground or the ice at a rate that would dishearten a professional runner or skater. But when we hear that he has been known to pursue and attack a human being whose sole offence has been to come within smelling distance, or to kill and eat a fellow-bear, or to try and force an entry through a ship's porthole, we may be sure that at times he is very hard driven for food.

In such a case we must make allowances for him ; maddened by starvation, even a good-sized dog would be a formidable companion in a lonely spot. And many instances furnished by travellers, whose testimony we may not doubt, go to show that, when the Polar bear's stomach is decently full, he will run away from man as quickly as his brown or black brother, and a great deal more quickly than the grizzly bear. The very well-known episode in the life of Nelson, as related by Southey, is almost a case in point.

When only a lad, the great sailor accompanied an expedition to the North Pole that was fitted out by the Royal Society. One night, while his ship was lying off the Greenland coast, he amused himself by going in search of a bear that was said to be in the vicinity. With only one companion, he set off in the fog across the ice ; and, greatly to the astonishment and horror of those on board, was seen, when the fog lifted at early morning, trying to hammer in the skull of one of these terrors of the North with the butt-end of a mukset.

The youthful hunters had come to the end of their ammunition, and now, only separated from the bear by a narrow cleft in the ice, Nelson was about to try con-

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usions with him at close quarters, when the sound of the ship's gun ordered him to come aboard. At the report the bear started back as if he had been shot, and, turning away, was soon out of sight.

As an instance of the marvellous sagacity of the animal, as well as in further support of his alleged readiness to flee from man or his works, we may quote a case related by Scoresby in his "Account of the Arctic Regions."

Some sailors had caught sight of a she-bear with her two young ones, and, forgetting that "a bear that is bereaved of her whelps" is about the last animal that a sensible man should try to measure his strength and resources against, they determined to possess themselves of one of the little ones. While still beyond gun-range, the mother caught sight of the men, and, obeying what was evidently her first instinct, she started to flee, turning every now and again to encourage the cubs to keep up with her. This they soon showed themselves unable to do, and there was every likelihood that their pursuers would overtake them before long.

Not to be daunted by obstacles, the intelligent beast tried to set her babies an example by running swiftly for a little way, and then pausing for them to come up with her, at the same time giving vent to peculiar little cries as though to warn them of their danger. At last, seeing that they could not possibly keep her pace, she seized first one, then the other, and hurled them ahead of her. When she had repeated this clever manœuvre twice or thrice, the little ones evidently began to realize what her motive was, and accordingly did all in their power to further her efforts. As each one was thrown forward, it continued

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running until she overtook it, and was ready to give it a fresh impetus ; and this wonderful plan was persevered in till the sailors were obliged to own themselves outdone and to give up the chase.

The most terrible evil, however, that can befall the white bear, and one which he seldom seems to think of providing against, is the work, not of man or beast, but of the sea. The author just quoted states that he once saw one of these creatures imprisoned on a block of floating ice two hundred miles from land ; and many Arctic explorers bear similar testimony. Though the bear is too well protected by his fur, as well as too accustomed to the climate of the frigid zone, to fall a victim to the death-sleep that so often attacks non-acclimatized animals or men, he is not exempt from a certain drowsiness which sometimes overcomes him, particularly after a heavy meal.

It may happen that he elects to go to sleep on a portion of the ice that is destined suddenly to be severed from the main block, and, on waking, finds himself cut off from his friends by several miles of sea. The same thing may happen when, worsted by a school of walruses that he has ventured to attack, he takes refuge on the first piece of ice that lies to hand—often a floating piece. In either case the poor wretch's plight is truly deplorable, for he will not take to the water unless he has some mark to swim at, and the fish that he can seize by stealth through a seal-hole are now able to keep out of his reach ; so that, as a rule, he is doomed to a lingering death from starvation. When two or more bears are thus cut off, the outcome is obvious : the weaker must die to feed the stronger.

Sometimes the tide will bear one of the poor half-starved creatures ashore on the Scandinavian or Iceland

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ast, and then his behaviour at sight of the first living  
ing that comes in his way, be it man or beast, is such as  
have gained for him the evil character which he bears  
among all the sailors and fishermen of the North—that  
an implacable enemy to the whole animal creation ;  
character which, as we have seen, does him but scant  
justice, and is purely the fault of circumstances.

## CHAPTER II

### HUNTING THE WILD REINDEER

The reindeer.—Origin of the name.—His home.—The domesticated animal's great temptation.—Mr. Peter Dobell.—The reindeer's disposition.—A demand for five hundred carcasses.—Pursuit of a herd of six thousand.—The best time to hunt.—Cut off on all sides.—Return of the herd to the plateau.—The gadflies.—A champion of the herd.—Rushing into the trap.—The slaughter.—Death of a hunter.—Taming the rest of the captives.—How to drive a reindeer.

By "reindeer," the animal known only to North Europe and Asia must be understood here ; his American kinsman, the caribou, will receive attention in Chapter IV.

Our name for this beast is somewhat misleading, "rein" being merely a corruption of the German verb *rennen*, to run. His home is on the ice deserts of the Arctic Regions, as well as in Spitzbergen, Lapland, European and Asiatic Russia, and Finland. His shape is so well known from pictures that it demands little description ; in size he is about equal to the British deer, though of much stouter build.

Another popular mistake is that of regarding him as essentially a domestic animal. In reality he is no more so than the Texan horse or the Asiatic elephant ; though, like them, he is not difficult to tame, when once he finds himself a captive beyond all hope of freedom.

Anyone seeing for the first time the enormous herds



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tame reindeer that roam unrestrained over the steppes and tundras of the Far North, might wonder that they do not make their escape, particularly when they have not been born and reared in captivity. Yet, generally speaking, they are seldom tempted thereto. One bait there is that will draw them, the existence of which it is the herd-owner's constant endeavour to abolish. This is the fly-killing mushroom (*Agaricus muscarius*), or the *hook hamor*, as the Siberians call it. The reindeer has an immoderate fondness for this fungus, when once he has acquired a taste for it, and, unless all traces of it are carefully removed from his whereabouts, he will stray for miles seeking to find more. On these occasions the search for the missing herd resolves itself into a veritable reindeer hunt, and sometimes days and weeks elapse before the herd is again collected; even then many may be found to be missing. Nor is it an uncommon occurrence, when hunting wild herds, to find among them one or more individuals with the private mark of some owner branded on them.

A genuine wild-reindeer hunt is exciting enough at the beginning, but both disappointing and dangerous in the finish. An interesting account of one is given by Mr. Peter Dobell, who, travelling from Russia to China by way of Siberia in the days when no Siberian railway was yet dreamt of, had an excellent opportunity of studying the habits of this useful and long-suffering creature.

Judging from the domesticated specimens which he first saw among the Siberians, he was disposed to take the view of many naturalists and travellers in those parts—that the reindeer is a brow-beaten, spiritless-looking object, a prey to man and beast and insect; half starved,

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and without the wit or the courage to defend himself from his enemies. But this opinion was speedily to be modified and improved when he came in touch with the wild creature.

The commander of some Russian troops stationed no far distant sent, to the village where Mr. Dobell was making a halt, an instant demand for five hundred reindeer carcasses. On the same evening, word was brought by native scouts sent out from the village that a herd of six thousand or more of wild deer were browsing on a piece of rising ground some five or six miles to northward.

Much of that night was passed in the construction of a huge wooden enclosure at a point midway between the village and the spot where the deer were gathered; and at early morning the peasants, accompanied by Dobell and armed with stout clubs and spears, set out in a body. With them went a pack of dogs, fierce and fleet, seeming a cross between the Russian greyhound and the Eskimo dog; half wild themselves, and apparently well calculated to terrify and drive, and, unless carefully watched, to pull down the hunted animals.

The scouts had not exaggerated; fully six thousand deer, all of them sturdy and well fed, were roaming over a low tableland, cropping the shrubs and lichens that flourished there in great profusion. The fat and healthy appearance of the animals was due to the fact of its being the autumn. Reindeer migrate twice a year—in spring and in autumn—and it is during these seasons that the hunting takes place, the latter being preferred, both because the herds have had the benefit of the summer feeding, and also because they stand less chance of escape by means of the rivers, which in the spring are still covered

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with ice. The deer can, of course, swim fast enough when absolutely driven to it ; but as long as they possibly can they avoid the rivers, and so are often caught with comparative ease, where, if the water were frozen, they would scamper across it and quickly out-distance their pursuers. At sight of the herd, the dogs set off at a brisk gallop round to the far side of the little plateau ; but, before they could come within touch of the reindeer, these had scented their approach and were careering in a body down the steep slope on the north side, making for the plain beyond ; for no dog ever born has a keener sense of smell than the reindeer.

Dobell was disposed to give up the hunt as futile, but his companions made light of this initial disappointment.

"They cannot escape us," said the principal hunter. "Before they have run another two miles they will come to a wide stream, and that will turn them back ; if, indeed, they ever reach it. There ! what did I say ?"

The party had by this time reached the top of the tableland, from which a wide view of the country round was afforded. The fleeing herd had stopped as though mystified, and were standing restlessly, noses in air, midway between the hunters and a wide tributary stream that ran in almost a straight line from east to west.

"I suppose they smell the water and are afraid of it ?" remarked the Englishman.

"No, your excellency, it is not that. They are terrified by the gadflies, and they see no hill but this on which to take refuge from them. Ah ! they are prettily caught. They will be back here directly, and we must climb down this side-slope if we do not wish to be trampled to death." Next to the wolf and the wolverene, or glutton, the

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reindeer's bitterest foe is the gadfly, which, during the summer and autumn, pursues him relentlessly, worrying him till his life becomes unendurable. Worse than this, in the later autumn, just when he is exchanging his grey brown summer coat for a thicker, woolly covering of a lighter shade, these pestilential insects elect to lay their eggs on the surface of the hair ; and, as these hatch, the larvæ pierce a way for themselves through the outer skin, driving the wretched creature almost beside himself with pain and irritation. From these tormentors his only chance of escape is to flee to the higher ground and remain there.

Seeing the herd disorganized and halting, the dogs redoubled their pace, and the deer, thus placed between two fires, rapidly made up their minds to return to their former refuge. The dogs, being at odds of less than one to a hundred, did not charge the enemy, but sought to get between them and the river—a measure which did credit to their instinct of self-preservation. Even as it was, one old male, presumably the champion of the herd, made a sidelong sweep with his antlers at the nearest hound, which, the next moment, was sent stunned and lacerated a good twelve or fifteen feet away.

Scared by the swarm of flies that buzzed round them, and terrified at the baying of the pack, the reindeer pressed closer together, turned, and eventually dashed in a body back to the tableland, on either side of which the hunters were waiting—a few in reindeer cars, but most of them on foot—ready to drive the panic-stricken animals into the compound prepared for them.

Compared to a stampede of cattle, or even of ordinary stags, the rush of the herd sounded curiously muffled and hushed ; for the feet of reindeer are covered with stiff,



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strong hair, even underneath, and this prevents them from slipping when running on the ice. Seeing the eminence in front of them, they made no attempt to turn on the dogs that were now at their very heels, but scrambled like mountain-goats up the incline. But here was no rest or refuge for them, for the hunters on either side climbing nearly to their level, all shouting together, and hurling an occasional stick or stone, added to their surprise and panic. The dogs behind increased their barking, and in one or two cases even pulled down aaggard deer, so that, poor beasts, they had no alternative but to "keep on going."

They pushed despairingly down the opposite hill, only to find themselves between the two detachments of hunters, who had raced down to the level as quickly as they, and with still the inevitable dogs snapping at their heels and threatening their haunches. Hoping to outrun their human persecutors, they fled across the plain in a straight line ; but the men in the cars could keep pace with them, and, ahead, a lane of women and children was waiting to act as a main channel to the treacherous enclosure.

When Dobell, panting and almost exhausted with his running, came up with the rest, hardly a score of the deer had escaped ; the bulk were fast enclosed in the staked compound.

Next came the "death." With the exception of the five or six hundred doomed animals, the herd was allowed to escape—or, rather, was driven by shouts and stones—into a larger enclosure that opened out of the compound, the entry of which was abruptly closed by sliding poles as soon as a sufficient number had passed through.

To English ideas, the slaughter that followed was some-



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what revolting, though, indeed, the operation was not as free from danger as at first might appear. The outer gate was flung open, and dogs and men swarmed in, while the persecuted prisoners huddled themselves together in one corner of the trap. Now that no restraint was laid on their movements, the dogs seemed averse to attacking the antlered crowd, and contented themselves with barking, springing back immediately at the least hint of aggressive movement on the part of the game. The hardy natives, on the other hand, made no ceremony about the work that they had in hand, but plunged with clubs or spears into the midst of the herd.

At first Mr. Dobell decided that there was nothing further worth a sportsman's watching, and was turning away, disgusted at the spectacle of such unresisted slaughter, when he saw something that encouraged him to remain. What had at first seemed to him mere insane fright or meek surrender, on the part of the animals, now showed itself to have some method about it. The reindeer, limited though their intelligence was, had grasped the idea that they were in greater danger from the men than from the noisy, blustering dogs ; and the males were only waiting while the females—distinguishable by their smaller antlers—found their way to the centre of the crowd, to offer a very decided stand. Evidently the first of those slain were females that were tardy in seeking shelter.

Suddenly one old buck, then another, then several more, separated themselves from their fellows, and showed signs of readiness to do battle. Dobell had allowed for their being able to do considerable damage with their horns, but here, he imagined, their self-protective resources ended ;



### THE REINDEER'S METHOD OF DEFENCE

The damage which can be inflicted by a reindeer when cornered is not confined to his horns, for he rears up on his hind legs and lands out violently at his assailant with both forefeet together.



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therefore he was considerably astonished when, as one of the natives came forward with spear couched, the nearest reindeer reared on his haunches, and landed out boldly with both fore-feet together, striking the unfortunate hunter in the abdomen, and bringing him to the ground. But, the next moment, the plucky beast fell, with his skull smashed by the club of another hunter. Nothing daunted, the other males offered the same resistance, knocking down a dozen or more men, who, active and experienced as they were, could not always escape so powerful an onslaught. Needless to say, Dobell did not wait to see the end of such a revolting massacre ; but he learned afterwards that one man was killed and four or five permanently injured by the frantic resistance of the deer, in addition to several others who had minor wounds or fractures to display.

For a day or two the Englishman could not bring himself to taste the flesh of animals thus slaughtered ; but at last, yielding to curiosity, he found it nutritious and even inviting. The natives themselves took the ordinary meat for granted, but they revelled in a dish that, to our palates, would be nauseating. The lichen and masticated moss found in the stomachs of the dead animals was mixed with sweet berries and made into a cake—one of the most highly esteemed delicacies among the Tunguses, Samoyeds, and Kamchadales of Siberia. The Eskimos, still farther north, have exactly the same craving for the contents of this animal's stomach, though they prepare it differently, adding to the moss or lichen some of the blood of the beast, together with some meat, fat and lean, finely chopped. This appetizing concoction is smoke-dried, and forms a useful winter meal.

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Before he left his entertainers, Mr. Dobell had a chance of observing the transformation of the wild beast of the tundra into the domestic animal of the village. Hunger or sameness of diet is no punishment to the reindeer ; he is too used to such a state of things ; and, as a rule, starvation plays no part in his breaking-in. After being shut up for nearly three days, the animals showed little disposition to rebel. They were divided amongst their captors, and each man at once set to work to accustom his beasts to their task. A stout collar of reindeer-skin was fastened round the neck of the animal that required breaking in, and from this a rope made of tendons was carried under his belly, and made fast to the front of a sledge of much heavier build than those employed for ordinary purposes of locomotion. Where one particular individual showed signs of refractoriness, an extra pair of traces, one on either side, was fastened between the collar and the sledge.

The driving apparatus was simpler still, for it consisted merely of a single cord tied round the base of the horns. Thus harnessed for the first time, the deer made no objection to running, but, with the unaccustomed weight behind him, soon found that he could no longer choose his own pace or, altogether, his own direction. In reality, there is but one thing that the wild reindeer has to learn before he can draw a sledge as well as his domestic brother, and that is to obey the touch of the rein that is his guiding signal. In driving this curious steed, the occupant of the sledge lays his single cord across the animal's right haunch when he is to go to the right, or on the left when he is to turn in the reverse direction ; and, to do these half, or wholly, uncivilized masters justice, they generally inculcate this lesson rather by patience than by cruelty.



## CHAPTER III

### ADVENTURES WITH WOLVES

The wolf's character.—A boatswain who fought a pack of wolves.—The pursuit.—The boatswain at bay.—Meeting the enemy with rifle-butt. — Rescued. — Man-eating wolves. — Eskimo method of trapping them.—Some frightened captives.—The wolf's ingenuity. —Wolf-taming.—A wolf that refused to "quit."—"Jack's" method of domesticating himself.—His tragic death.—Hunting the wolf for food.—Eating him.

WOLVES, we know, are abundant enough in the temperate regions of Europe and in India ; there is even a Tasmanian "wolf," like enough in shape and disposition to his antipodean namesake to appear to be of no very distant connexion ; but the North—the region of cold and of scant victuals—is what one thinks of as his real home ; and those wolves which are not by nature peculiar to that quarter of the globe are being driven there gradually. We find them, in one form or another, almost anywhere and everywhere north of lat. 40°, except in those quarters where, as in the case of Britain, he has been systematically exterminated.

In appearance the average wolf puts one in mind of a stiffly built, though lean and short-haired, collie ; but the set and colour of his eyes—they are slanting, and of a flame-coloured green—render him more savage-looking

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than most dogs. His character is too well known to need much description—that of a sneaking bully who relies on force of numbers, and not on individual pluck. In at least ninety per cent. of the stories of travellers being attacked by wolves, we find that the assailants are in a pack, and that the assailed are in a very decided minority. And even then there are cases on record of man's ready wit and enduring courage being more than a match for them.

The boatswain of one of the ships that were sent in search of poor Franklin went off one day by himself reindeer-hunting, and after a good deal of patient stalking, succeeded in shooting one of the animals. When he had made a convenient bundle of as much of the carcass as he could remove, he started to drag it along over the snow back to the ship. But he had not gone far before he heard a faint, metallic noise behind him that made him quicken his steps, for he knew at once that it proceeded from a pack of wolves. The brutes had smelt the carcass from afar, and must soon reach the spot where the reindeer had been killed. To devour the head and intestines that he had left behind would, he knew well, occupy the famished creatures only a few moments, and thenceforth they would be travelling on a hot scent.

Yet the sailor obstinately refused to leave his prize and make a dash for safety, though he changed his walk to a brisk trot. The baying came nearer and nearer, and for a second or two swelled into a bellowing, discordant whoop, a sure sign that the wolves had reached the remainder of the deer's carcass. The boatswain, still keeping up his uniform trot, now gained a little on his pursuers, but only for a minute; the next, the barking sounded as near as ever—nearer, in fact, though on looking

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back the boatswain could still see nothing, for a low hill separated him from his starting-point

But, the next time he stole a glance round, the wolves had scaled this, and were almost falling over one another in their anxiety to reach the bottom again; and the whole thirty-five or forty of them, looking in the distance like so many rats or rabbits, came racing after the man, or the carcass, or both, at a speed which put all hope of flight out of the boatswain's head. Like a prudent strategist, the old man now prepared to take whatever advantage the ground offered him, and accordingly made a dash for a rock that projected some fifteen feet above the snow. Arrived there, he took up a position at the side of the rock, which was rectangular and about ten feet long by three broad, and here stood in such a manner that he would not be screened by it from the telescope of anybody on board who happened to be looking that way; then, throwing his venison on to a broken ledge a foot above his head, he opened his cartridge-pouch ready for action, and shouted lustily to the pack to come on and do their worst against a British sailor.

Come on they certainly did, and were met with two charges of large shot, which brought down the two foremost wolves, and sent two more howling and limping to the rear of the pack. The others paused, hesitating between attacking the man, running away, and devouring their fallen comrades; and the sturdy old sailor took advantage of the interval to reload. At the next two discharges another wolf fell dead, and one ran madly backwards, evidently blinded by some of the shots.

The pack seemed by this time to have "agreed to differ," for while one section fell upon the bodies of the

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dead wolves, another closed in on the boatswain, who had bare time to insert one cartridge. The foremost wolf now ventured so near that he got the full benefit of the shot, which, being fired at such close quarters, blew his head to atoms, and his followers gave back a foot or two, though not sufficiently to allow the sailor to think of reloading. Even while he wondered what to do next, three of the creatures leapt forward again, only leaving him time to club his gun and prepare to receive them.

Savagely jabbing the stock in the face of the first comer, the boatswain fetched the next one a back-handed blow on the top of the head, at the same time shouting with all the breath he had left. One wolf recoiled with great lamentation, the second dropped dead, while the third still stood grinning like a lurcher that meditates an attack on a sheep.

“You’d better by half sheer off, mate,” growled the old fellow, accompanying his words with a not badly judged kick at the beast’s jaw, just as he was about to fly at him. The iron-tipped boot caught the wolf just in the throat, and he retired yelping and vomiting.

The next moment the sailor was as near death as even a man of his calling is ever likely to be, without actually dying; for a crash sounded somewhere to his left, and a rifle-bullet hissed past his chest so close that it scored a little line along the front of his jacket. Yet this ill-judged shot had the good effect of causing his nearest and most threatening persecutors to turn their heads towards the place whence it came. The boatswain involuntarily imitated them, and saw coming towards him at the double, Commander Osborn—the ship’s chief—with a sergeant of marines. Thus reinforced, he began



### A PLUCKY BOATSWAIN

The boatswain placed the venison on a ledge above him, and after shooting several of the wolves he had only time to club his gun before they attacked him. He jabbed one savagely in the face with the stock, and landed the next one a backhanded blow on the top of the head.





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to grow overbold, and charged at the enemy—a motion which might have proved fatal to him but for the speedy arrival of the sergeant with his service rifle and the Commander with a revolver ; for two wolves that had feared his face had no objection to his back, and one of them that had now got behind him was actually springing up to make a snap at his shoulder, when a revolver-bullet from the officer killed him in mid-air. Then, after a little more snarling, all those animals that were not occupied with a gruesome meal turned and fled, and a few more shots soon killed or routed these.

Among all classes of wolves there is sometimes found what is known as a “ man-eater ” ; that is, one that has somehow been allowed to acquire such a taste for human flesh that he will muster up enough courage to lurk outside a house and wait for a child. Quite recently one of these pests ran off with a baby from a Norwegian farm, and the child was only saved by the opportune arrival of a big dog, which drove off the wolf.

Commander Osborn heard similar and more horrible reports among the Eskimos, who showed him with great pride that, in a general way, they were able to make short work of any wolf that should dare to come near their dwellings. Three blocks of ice, chipped to equal size, were placed as boys set the bricks of a bird-trap—i.e., two parallel, and the third across one of the end openings. Inside, a bait of reindeer-meat was placed, and above, a pivot-door made of slats of driftwood was wedged ; and no sooner did the wolf touch the bait than he pulled over the slender prop which supported the door. This immediately fell in on him, and as it was too heavy for him to raise, he must lie there till the Eskimos

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came and put an end to him by stabbing him through the slats.

If he is once trapped, the wolf differs from almost every other animal in not becoming more fierce than usual. Even a mouse will bite the finger that is inserted into his trap ; but the wolf, when quite certain that he cannot get away, will as often as not crouch in one corner and howl dismally at the approach of man. The Rev. J. G. Wood even quotes a case wherein an American farmer, who had caught three wolves in a pit, coolly lowered himself into it, " pulled out the hind-legs of the wolves as they lay trembling at the bottom, and with his knife severed the chief tendon of the hind limbs, so as to prevent their escape."

But—first catch your wolf. He is a wary beast, almost as difficult to trap as a fox. The late Professor George Romanes states that a wolf, for which a spring-gun has been set, has been known to sever the cord connecting bait and gun, and then to march off in triumph with the bait.

Some naturalists have said that this animal is incapable of being tamed. The statement is rather sweeping, for hunters, soldiers, and sailors have repeatedly been most successful, not only in domesticating wolf-cubs, but even in taming full-grown animals. Mr. George Ruxton, an Englishman who travelled many thousands of miles in Canada and the States, while agreeing with other authorities as to the creature's cowardice, credits him with a certain amount of affection and teachableness.

Mr. Ruxton had shot a moose, and while his servants were quartering the body, an old black wolf suddenly appeared from among the trees, and stood whining like

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hungry dog. Knowing the cowardice of the beast, the Englishman would not expend a cartridge on him, but picking up a piece of wood, threw it at him, and the wolf fled. But before the party were ready to return to their camp, back came the animal whining as before. The young colonist took off his cap and brandished it, saying, "If you come much nearer, old friend, you'll get hurt"; and once more the intruder turned tail. But after a few minutes he came back, and the young Canadian, slicing off a piece of waste meat, held it out to him, with the remark: "Come on, Jack; good dog! Beg!" This time the wolf did not take flight, but merely backed away nervously, like a dog that expects a blow. The young fellow again spoke encouragingly to him, and at last, keeping one hand on the revolver in his belt in case of need, he walked straight up to the hungry creature, still holding out the tempting delicacy. But this was too much for "Jack's" nerves, and he slunk off, albeit with his head turned back towards the proffered meal. Yet no sooner did the hunter retrace his steps than he barked back again, and gave the most piteous howl. "Let us try an experiment," said Ruxton; and he gave directions to the servants to gather up carefully those parts of the moose that should have been left behind; and then all set off towards the camp, the wolf following at a pace that maintained a uniform distance between him and them; and when they arrived at their destination he sat down on his haunches and whined again. It was now pretty clear that there was nothing to fear from him, but to make quite sure the young Canadian stole as near to him as he would suffer without treating, and lay down as though asleep or dead. But,

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though he persevered in this for a quarter of an hour, the animal would come no nearer ; and as soon as the camp fire was lighted, he moved off altogether.

But in the morning, when everything was packed up for a long march northwards, one of the men cried out, " Here's our Jack turned up again " ; and, more hungry looking than ever, the wolf stood meekly outside the camp. This time Ruxton flung him a piece of meat. He started back as though he thought it was a brickbat, but at last, getting scent of the missile, he pounced upon it and disposed of it as only a wolf can, then stood licking his lean chops and blinking his willingness to receive further donations. Another piece was thrown to him and he made short work of it ; then another, and another till Ruxton began to wonder what the butcher's bill of a tame wolf would amount to in the course of a year.

The travellers moved on, and Jack followed, always backing, however, if any of the men turned to wait for him ; and that night he lay down to sleep outside the range of the fire-light, having made a supper of some broken meat and bones that were thrown to him. This sort of thing continued for several days, the wolf becoming tamer each day, till, though he would not allow himself to be touched, he would take—or more properly speaking, snatch—a piece of meat from a man's hand.

But one afternoon, when Jack was trotting gaily behind his friends, strange voices were heard among the trees ; and while the travellers paused to see who the newcomers might be, the crack of a rifle sounded close by, and poor Jack dropped dead.

" I presume you didn't know your lives were in danger," observed the idiot who had shot him.



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"We know now," said the young Canadian dryly. "A fellow who'll pot at a tame wolf, will pot at anything."

A traveller in the same parts—the celebrated John Charles Frémont—tells us two things about the American wolf: one, of which most people are aware, that he makes out a poor show when pitted against the bison; the other, less known as well as less credible, that he is very good eating.

During one of his exploring expeditions Frémont saw a fight between a pack of these animals and a herd of bison, very similar to that witnessed by Captains Lewis and Clarke;\* and he was also reduced to a very novel species of wolf-tracking—viz., to obtain food for himself and his followers. Winter had come before its time, and, owing to the scarcity of game, Frémont could see his party being reduced to a regimen of roots, boots, and berries, unless chance should throw some animal in their way.

One morning the hungry men came upon the trail of a small pack of wolves, but as these had passed along at a great rate, it was likely that the hunt would be a long one. They followed the track till after midday, and at last were rewarded by hearing the frantic baying of the pack. The men began to pluck up heart, for it was highly probable, from the sound, that the wolves had either started a moose, or else had cut off a bison from some herd that were belated in their southward migration.

The hunters branched off from their path as the trail suddenly made a sweep, and sure enough came upon the footprints of a bison. Then, as they drew nearer to the baying and yelping, and came in sight of the wolves,

\* See "Adventures in the Great Deserts," chap. iii.

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they found that the pack were carrying into practice a trick, the knowledge of which these animals share with jackals and other wild beasts of the *Canidæ*—that of driving their quarry towards a precipice, and frightening him over its brink. The bison, cut off from retreat by a crescent of wolves, went plunging on, and, unable to stop himself, fell headlong over the steep bluff to which his enemies had been urging him.

But if the explorers flattered themselves that they were in for a meal of bison-beef, they had reckoned without the wolves. Long before the men could reach the bluff, let alone climb down it, the pack had swept down a side path with the speed of a mountain-torrent, and when Frémont and his companions had come within gunshot the very bones of the dead animal were picked clean, and the wolves, smelling more flesh, were looking towards the men as though they would fain serve them as they had served the bison. This was awkward, for ammunition was short, and the wolves were over-many to be approached with butt-ends.

A dozen proved marksmen fired, each bringing down his wolf ; and the remainder of the pack, disconcerted by the volley, fled hot-foot.

We may judge how hungry these fellows must have been from the fact that no European or American animal will touch wolf's flesh—the wolf, of course, excepted. Yet they found the meat tasty enough, as other travellers have done before and since ; and Mr. Wood, in writing on the subject of wolf-flesh, says that “when properly dressed, it affords a most excellent dinner. The ribs are the portion which is most esteemed.”

## CHAPTER IV

### HUNTING THE ELK, THE CARIBOU, AND THE WAPITI

the elk, or moose.—His disposition.—“Calling.”—Another of Mr. Ruxton’s adventures.—“Creeping.”—A moose family.—An unexpected turn of the tables.—Some well-disciplined trappers.—The bull-moose missing.—An explanation.—Moose-stalking in winter.—A powerful swimmer.—The caribou.—Lieutenant Hardy’s caribou-chase.—A strange method of progress.—Nearly drowned.—The wapiti.—John Keast Lord.—The Indian’s reindeer.—Lassoing the animal.—The mystery of two strips of ermine.

WHETHER we dub him moose or elk, and whether his home is in North Europe, North Asia, or North America, the animal answering to those names is the same—one of the few instances of the old world and the new having an animal in common. He is the largest of all the deer family, his wide-spreading horns alone weighing about half a hundredweight; these, it should be explained, do not spread in branches like those of most deer, but rather like a leaf-like form, notched or scalloped round the upper edge.

The elk does not usually come to full size till he reaches his fourteenth year, and at that age he will measure six, and even seven, feet from the shoulder to the ground. His coat is of long, bristling, grey-brown hair, changing in the winter (as far as the male is concerned) to a shiny black; and his neck is furnished with a short mane of

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coarse hair. His speed and powers of endurance are best illustrated by the fact that when domesticated—and the Swedes were at one time most successful as elk-tamers—he can draw a loaded sledge a distance of two hundred miles in a day.

Driven to bay, he can be a very fierce antagonist, for his enormous strength, and the ease with which he can use his head as a battery, render him unapproachable by dogs or wolves, unless in large packs. When not interfered with, he is as timid as the rest of his family, except just at the pairing season. It is then that the hunters, both Indian and civilized, most pursue him, for he is easily attracted by any noise that, at a distance, he can mistake for the cry of the female. The artificial sound which most nearly approaches this cry is the dull, booming blast given forth by a wooden trumpet, and it is of this implement that the starters of the game avail themselves. But woe betide the man who “calls up” a moose, and is not prepared to shoot as soon as the game comes within range; for the animal does not like to be made a fool of, and is ever ready to butt, or trample, or kick the unwary caller to death.

Another method of elk or moose hunting is by “creeping” him, and this Mr. George Ruxton, the traveller mentioned in the last chapter, once or twice saw put into practice among the Canadian trappers. Creeping consists in closely following the animal’s trail till the hunter comes within shooting distance; and it goes without saying that this is generally a long and wearisome process. Ruxton and his companions set off at daybreak one morning, following a recent trail till it led to a more open part of the forest, where they found signs of there having been a

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family gathering of moose ; for, in addition to the track of the " bull " which they had been pursuing, there were the marks of an old female and of half a dozen younger animals. This was not particularly strange, for as often as not these deer live in families made up of grandparents, parents, and children.

But now the trail wound away again into the thickest part of the forest, till Ruxton, who was then new to this form of sport, could not conceive how the animals could have made their way ; for the path they had taken was broken and rocky, often blocked by fallen trees and intersected by tributary streams ; more than that, in places it was half roofed over by the low, horizontal boughs of the trees on either side, so that a six-foot man, in walking under them, would touch them with his cap. Yet Ruxton's companions assured him that there was no sign of even the " bull's " having decreased his speed in passing under them. After an interminable march, one of the trappers declared that he could hear the animals rattling at the twigs of the trees ahead, and all stood still to listen. It should be mentioned that the neck of the moose is disproportionately short, and that therefore he is seldom able to graze like other beasts of his class ; instead, he crops at bushes and the low-hanging boughs of trees.

Ruxton himself could hear nothing, though the spot where the animals were supposed to be was to windward of them. But evidently the hunter was right, for his companions, in moving on again, stole forward like redskins on the war-path ; and those whose guns were strapped over their shoulders speedily unslung them. After a minute's walk, the trapper who had



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before stopped the party cried : “ Hold on ! What was that ? ”

Everyone paused, and Ruxton could now easily hear the steady tramp of feet, like the approach of half a dozen unshod horses coming towards them over the short grass. Even the wisest of the trappers looked puzzled, and nobody ventured to speak. Suddenly the leader said in a loud whisper :

“ Make yourselves as small as you can. They’re coming this way.” And the Englishman had an opportunity of admiring the wonderful skill and celerity with which these men each singled out a hiding-place for himself—one in a natural gully, another under a bush, a third on his knees behind a fallen tree-trunk, and so on. For the Canadian or the Yankee hunter, born and trained in the ways of woodcraft, and accustomed to find his purse, his stomach, and often his life, depending on the success of his warfare with wild beasts, adds all the energy, resourcefulness, and calculating powers of the white race to the subtlety of sense and activity of body which he has acquired from his Indian teachers.

Ruxton was looking helplessly round for a place of concealment when a young Canadian, who had leapt on to the broad limb of a tree three feet above the ground, put out a hand and dragged him up beside him.

“ You’ll get a shot here safe enough,” he whispered. “ Thank goodness the wind’s this way, and they can’t smell us. Wonder what—— Oho ! Look out ! ”

The next moment his rifle went off, so close to Ruxton’s ear as to deafen him for the moment, and a young moose buck that had come in sight fell dead. Then, all round, sounded shots from other guns, and to the Englishman’s

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ewildered gaze a whole regiment of moose seemed to have sprung from nowhere, and to be falling right and left before the unerring aim of his companions.

The firing ceased again, and Ruxton and his colonial friend jumped down from their tree.

"Where's the old bull?" asked someone. "Who got him?"

Nobody had either shot or seen the individual. The last speaker had dropped his gun and drawn a knife to give the *coup de grâce* to the old female, that was still feebly kicking, when, to the Englishman's horror, the missing animal sprang out snorting from among the trees, and rushed open-mouthed at the man who was about to stab the dying moose.

The size of the beast was appalling, for he was higher at the back, by a good two feet, than a cart-horse. Ruxton instinctively fired at him, wounding him in the short ribs, but the moose ignored the bullet, and charged forward, ready to use his most formidable weapon—his hoof—on his victim. And so terrible is the power of that weapon that he can kill a wolf, and often incapacitate a bear, with a single kick.

But the trappers were like a well-disciplined squad of soldiers. Accident had divided them into two parties, one on either side of the moose, and as those on the opposite side to which Ruxton stood levelled their guns, the others dropped to the ground as though shot, one of them tagging Ruxton with him. The little volley crashed forth, and the man with the knife had only time to take a backward spring before the moose dropped forward on to the very spot where he had been standing.

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While the hunters were debating as to what could have caused this peculiar stampede of the herd in their direction, two strangers strolled up.

“Where do *we* come in?” asked one of them. “We started your game for you.” And it transpired that these hunters had accidentally come upon the little family of moose from the far side; but the animals had scented them long before they could get near enough to shoot, and in escaping from them, had run into a worse fate.

In Mr. Ruxton's next experience of moose-tracking everything seemed to be in favour of the hunters, and everything to the disadvantage of the hunted. A heavy fall of snow had covered the ground over two feet deep, a circumstance which the trappers did not fail to avail themselves of.

All the men donned snow-shoes, and thus were able to glide swiftly over the thinly-glazed surface. Ahead, a moose was painfully struggling to get away from his pursuers, of whom he had got scent long before they came in sight. The poor beast had little thought of turning to bay, for, with his legs more than half buried in the snow, he could no more kick than a hobbled horse.

Yet the trappers were not to have everything their own way. By the time they had come within long range, it was seen that the moose was making for a hill-torrent, which it was his evident intention to cross. Two of the men fired, but at that distance their bullets could not have more than penetrated the skin, and beyond a furtive look round, the moose took no notice of them. The hunters doubled their speed, but the animal, plodding



### A CORNERED MOOSE

A bull moose sprang out open-mouthed from among the trees and made for the hunter, who had dropped his gun, but a volley rang out, and the animal fell almost on the hunter, who had only just time to spring backward.





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steadily on, threw himself into the torrent, and began bravely to make for the far side ; for the moose is a most powerful and rapid swimmer, able to cross a current that no man would dare to venture in. He has been used from his earliest days to the water, and in summer spends much of his time buried up to the neck in a pool or river, in order to escape the stings of the many insects that love to torment him.

“ Let him go,” said one of the trappers. “ We couldn’t get him if we shot him ;” for the stream was not fordable for miles, and the current far too swift to hold out much hope of its being frozen lower down. And the moose, so tantalizingly within reach, scrambled up the bank on the other side, and disappeared among the pine-trees.

The caribou is not more than half the height of the elk, though his tall, handsome antlers make him appear a large beast ; and he is so closely related to the reindeer as to have gained the name of the reindeer of the West, though no one has ever succeeded in taming him or persuading him to draw a sledge. He is to be found in the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions of America, more commonly on the eastern than on the western side.

Opinions differ as to caribou-meat as an article of diet. Some people maintain that it is as good as British venison, others that it is tasteless and most unsatisfying. But there are no two ways of thinking where the value of the skin is concerned. Properly cured, it is capable of being made into clothes that will absolutely defy wet or cold ; and it is mainly for its hide that the Eskimos and the

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hunters of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia pursue the animal.

Lieutenant Hardy, an artillery officer who was spending his furlough in Eastern Canada, found caribou-hunting a very exciting sport, not unmixed at times with danger. Guided by two Indian lads, he had one day succeeded in following up the trail of one of these creatures across the snow, and at last contrived to get near enough for a shot at him. But luck was against him : he fired and missed ; and, without waiting for a second attempt on his life, the caribou fled at an astonishing rate, well protected by his broad hoofs either from slipping, or from sinking in spots where the snow was unfrozen. The Indian boys gave chase, and Mr. Hardy followed them as speedily as he could, till they came in sight of a small lake which was covered with ice. On to this the caribou had plunged, and was running along as comfortably as though on land ; and the hunter, pulling up breathless, saw his game escaping him beyond hope of recovery : for the Indians had warned him that, if once this animal is allowed to reach the ice, to come up with him again is next to an impossibility.

Not to be balked, the lieutenant started off across the ice and shouted to his guides to follow, and, the feet of all three being protected by moccasins, they made tolerably good progress. Suddenly the caribou paused, stumbled, and then went sliding along on his hams at scarcely a less rate than when he was running. Laughing and stumbling himself, the young soldier increased his speed, and was almost within gunshot when the beast jumped to his feet and continued running, this time making a deliberate turn to the right. Then Hardy saw, to his surprise, that

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One of the Indian boys, fleet as a greyhound, had also turned, and was trying to head the game off. The plan succeeded, for, seeing the redskin making for the same point at which he himself was aiming, the caribou doubled, and then fell over just as he had done before, and continued his progress by sliding. This peculiar trick arises from his extreme nervousness: he sees some obstacle in his path, or finds himself being pursued, and accordingly tries to pull up and wheel; but as a rule he is going too fast to be able to stop himself, and the result is that he generally covers a good half of the distance across the ice "sitting down."

The second Indian boy had been running on Hardy's left, and now, quick as thought, imitated his fellow-guide's manœuvre, Hardy pressing forward as best he could the while.

Once more the deer stumbled to his feet and caught sight of the second Indian. He hesitated, looking in every direction except the one that was still open to him, pawed the ice and bent his head for a moment as though he meditated an attack on one or other of the men; and while he still wavered, the Englishman shot him dead. As the animal fell, a horrible booming crash rumbled across the lake from side to side—a sound with which every skater is familiar—followed by a cry from the Indian on Hardy's right front, and in an instant the boy had disappeared beneath the ice.

To reach him in time to be of any use was almost hopeless, even if the ice had been perfectly safe all round him. Nevertheless, the Englishman started off in great haste for the spot; but before he was half-way there the drenched black hair of the Indian showed itself above the surface;

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then the lithe little body hoisted itself up on to a fir crag of ice, and, after a shake and a few stumbles, the redskin hurried off towards the fallen caribou. Light clad, active, and cool-headed, the youth had escaped without apparent difficulty what, to Hardy, would have been certain death.

The wapiti is a much larger beast than the caribou. Specimens have been seen that differed but little from the elk in size ; and he is unquestionably the handsomest of all the Northern deer, if not of the whole tribe—powerful, fleet, and courageous. To this must be added that he is exceedingly quarrelsome, and an incorrigible wife beater.

Of the many travellers who have hunted, trapped, or written about this somewhat formidable beast, none was better qualified to speak than the late Lieutenant John Keast Lord, army veterinary surgeon, whaler, trapper, zoologist, journalist, snake-charmer, archæologist, showman, and the first manager of the Brighton Aquarium.

This versatile man was at one time acting as naturalist to the British Columbia Boundary Commission, and during that time saw a great deal of the wapiti, as well as of the Indian methods of trapping and killing him.

He found many of the Indians using the animals precisely as the Eskimos use the reindeer—as draught-beasts—and in this capacity they proved most docile and enduring ; and at some camps he found large studs of tamed wapiti. The means by which these had come into their owners' possession varied, but in most cases they had been caught in pitfalls. A deep pit was dug



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and covered treacherously with turf ; over this were laid branches bearing either leaves or berries that would tempt the appetite of the animals. Sometimes a herd of about thirty would pass along, and out of that number at least ten would fall into the trap.

When a very large herd of wapiti were known to be in the neighbourhood, the Indians would go in chase on horseback, and often succeed in driving them into a huge staked enclosure, similar to that in which reindeer are caught. But while Lord was returning from a journey into the States, where he had been treating for a convoy of mules, he met with a system of wapiti-catching which was quite new to him—*i.e.*, by means of the lasso.

He had fallen in with a tribe of friendly Indians, and these were so fascinated by his great size, strength, perfect horsemanship, and mastery of their tongue, that they were all anxiety to entertain him, as well as to initiate him into their methods of fighting and hunting. And first they took him lassoing.

Riding at full speed, Lord and his companions crossed a bleak plain and entered a narrow strip of dismal forest. They had not been here long before shrill whistles from the far side were heard. These were signals from an advance guard, to the effect that a herd had been sighted and overtaken. Urging their horses through the break-neck thickets, Lord's party at length plunged once more into daylight and on to a desolate tableland, where a herd of close on a hundred deer were trotting nervously, first this way and then that.

With wild outcries the savages spread themselves out, and began to ride swiftly round and round the tableland,



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closing in more and more on the frightened creature till, utterly mystified and panic-stricken, they huddled together, or butted each other, in their despair. Then out came the lassos, and, regardless of either the wapiti's frantic struggles or their determined charges at horse or men, the redskins deftly captured each his deer, and then coolly drew bow and arrow on those that were left.

The getting home was a laborious matter, for a wapiti has no notion of meekly allowing himself to be towed along at his captor's chariot-wheels or saddle-girths; and Lord was not sorry to surrender his own charge to one of the Indians, for he wanted to keep the animal alive, and there seemed little chance of this while, alternating between backing and butting, the creature continually tempted his new owner to shoot him to save himself from accident to life or limb.

The wapiti venison proved so tasty that the Englishman hankered after more of it, and, not unwilling to show the chief of the tribe that his gun was as mighty as their bows, Lord invited him to accompany him on foot on a trail which he had discovered. The old brave and his two sons at once made ready, and, just at starting, politely begged the "great white warrior" to accept two small strips of ermine, one of which they bound round each of his ankles, leaving a few inches dangling like an ill-tied boot-lace. Thinking this to be some religious charm, the Englishman prudently submitted, and all four started on the trail of the deer, the redskins with their moccasins similarly adorned.

The tracks led into the dismal little wood aforementioned, and here the chief abruptly stopped, pointed

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rough the trees, and fell flat on his face ; and as his sons followed his example, Lord did the same. Crawling snake-like along in this manner, the hunters came within easy gunshot of a small herd ; and the Englishman's fingers itched to bring one of them down, but he was restrained by the courtesy due to his entertainers and their less powerful weapons.

But what was his astonishment to see the three savages suddenly roll over on their backs and raise both legs to a stiff perpendicular ?

Again he imitated them, and, with his ears now so close to the ground, could distinctly hear the footsteps of the deer coming a little nearer. Down went all three pairs of legs again ; the bodies rolled over, and the Indians wriggled on again, Lord doing his best to follow. But in another minute the strange performance was repeated, and once more the white man could hear the hoofs drawing nearer.

While he was wondering how these extraordinary proceedings would appeal to a shooting-party in England, the redskins had sprung round like trained acrobats, and three deer fell dead, each pierced by an arrow, while a fourth and fifth fell to Lord's barrels before the herd could get clear.

"Now, great chief," said the Englishman severely, when all had resumed their natural attitudes, "hitherto you have hidden none of the secrets of your tribe from your great white brother. What virtue lies in this charm ?" and he pointed to the strip of ermine on one of his moccasins.

"None," responded the Indian briefly. "It is no charm ; observe." He threw himself down as before,

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but all that Lord could see was that, as the wind caught it, the little bit of white fur fluttered like a lance-pennon.

"Well?" he asked, still puzzled.

"The wapiti see the ermine move; they wonder what it is; then they come a little nearer to look. That's all."

## CHAPTER V

### A WALRUS HUNT

seal with tusks.—The use of the tusks.—Hunting the walrus.—The sentries.—Enter a Polar bear.—Fight between bear and walruses.—Exit the bear.—The first walrus shot.—A strange method of landing.—A cordon of walruses to fight.—Appearance of a second cordon.—A prudent retreat.—Difficulty of obtaining tusks.—A narrow escape for the whole party.

THE walrus may be briefly described as a seal with tusks.

The seal must at all times be an object coveted by hunters, on account of its oil and its skin; but if we recollect that a walrus-carcaass also produces oil—often half a ton per beast—that the skin is almost as valuable, though used for other purposes, as the seal's, and that, besides all this, each tusk yields on an average from ten to twelve pounds of the most valuable grained ivory, we shall see that the walrus is an equally great temptation to the hunter and the fisherman.

There is, of course, a further reason why man should seek to kill him—namely, for food; for the hungry traveller or the savage must eat what he can get, and the home of the walrus is a land where little meat besides what is carried on the bones of himself and other sea-mammals is to be had. Therefore, the Eskimo and the Arctic

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explorer may perhaps be pardoned for their attacks on him, whether planned or unpremeditated.

The ground colour of this animal's coat is grey-black but this is covered with reddish hair. In length he averages eleven feet, and in girth about ten. The tusks usually about two inches in diameter at the base, vary from fifteen to thirty inches in length; these are simply elongated teeth fixed in the upper jaw, and their principal use is to assist the walrus in climbing the ice-hummocks for he digs them into the ice and makes a sort of alpenstock of them. In addition, he employs them in his search for food: by their means he tears off the seaweed that clings to the rocks, and burrows in the sand with them after the molluscs that have taken up their abode there. Finally, as a weapon of offence, they are as much to be dreaded even on land as a buffalo's horns.

To do him justice, though, the walrus is infinitely less pugnacious and ill-tempered than the seal. He is too mild, too phlegmatic, too lazy even, to be offensive for the most part. He has, however, two enemies to whom he can be merciless—the Polar bear, and the man who trespasses on what he regards as his territory. Of his readiness to hold his own against either of these, Captain Osborn, R.N., one of McClure's officers, gives us an account from personal observation.

When a ship is "iced up" in the Arctic Ocean the sailors must needs employ their time somehow, and the most natural method of doing so is by going in search of game that will eke out their food-supply. Having hunted deer, musk-oxen, and Polar bears for pleasure or profit, the officers turned their attention to the walrus, and three or four of them, headed by Captain Osborn, set off in



## A WALRUS HUNT

og-sledges to eastward, where they were most likely to find the sport they wished for. At one time they would not have had far to go. In the eighteenth century a few Englishmen secured eight hundred walrus carcasses in six hours; but nowadays such a quantity would hardly be taken in as many years by that number of men, for the animals continue to push farther and farther towards regions that are inaccessible even to the Eskimos.

A long drive across the ice brought the hunters in sight of a range of rocks and ice-blocks, beyond which one or two figures could plainly be seen moving. Within a couple of hundred yards of this they stopped to deliberate. The brown figures in the distance were so well guarded by the natural outworks that they had little to fear from guns, and, from all the travellers had heard, these were not the sort of creatures to encourage an attack at close quarters. At the same time, considering their comparatively slow movements, it would be but sorry sport to be at them from a distance.

While they were thus hesitating, two of the figures which, since the explorers had been watching, had become stationary now began to move, and in a moment a strange roaring, like the bellowing of a bull multiplied by twenty-five, arose from beyond the rocks.

"Confound them! they've seen us, and will be off to the water before we can get at them," said the Captain.

Leaving the sledges to the care of a couple of sailors, the hunters started running as fast as they could towards the bastion of rock. Osborn was the first to reach it, and, peering cautiously through the opening between two rocks, started back in amazement, and waved to his followers.

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"You see why they were kicking up that noise," he said, pointing through the opening.

The astonished sportsmen drew back whistling. What they had seen was a Polar bear trying to cut off a young female walrus from escaping to a patch of unfrozen water which, unknown to the travellers, lay only a short distance beyond the belt of rocks. The bear, untaught by past experiences, had sought to surprise a large herd that had been dozing a few yards from the water-line. A rat might as well try to surprise a well-bred terrier, for walruses have a most elaborate system of placing "watchmen" at all points of their resting-place, and the cry of these is as well understood by the others as the warning report of a sentry's rifle would be by soldiers in camp.

The little walrus-cow, seeing that escape was impossible, set up a succession of plaintive howls, while the bear, tired of dodging, prepared to make the blind rush at her for which he is famous. Just then three old bull-walruses raised their heads above water, and, from the edge of the ice, bellowed their defiance at the intruder. Madened by hunger, the bear turned to seek the meal which lay nearest to him, and, forgetting the little cow, cleared the space between himself and the foremost bull in two strides.

The ship's surgeon, who was one of the hunting-party, raised his gun, but the Captain stayed him.

"Half a minute. Let's see what'll happen," he said.

The old bull-walrus was no fool. While the bear's claws were still six inches away from his head, he dived. The bear, unable to pull himself up, fell headlong into the water, and in an instant his white coat was dyed with



### A BEAR AND WALRUS FIGHT

The bear made a leap at one of the walruses, but missed and slid into the water. He was instantly attacked by the formidable tusks, which scored his sides to the depth of two or three inches.



## A WALRUS HUNT

od, as the tusks of the next walrus scored his flank  
o inches deep. Meanwhile the little cow hopped  
vously to the water's edge, and made good her escape.  
Roaring almost as loudly as the walruses themselves,  
bear swam towards the bull that was approaching him,  
long before the two could meet, another pair of tusks  
aped the back of his neck for him. He turned his  
ad and snapped like a crocodile, but the aggressor had  
beyond his reach, and forty, if not fifty, walruses  
re snorting and bellowing round him before he could  
ke up his mind what to do next; and he was forced to  
nit that he was no match for them. He accordingly  
ang on to the ice again, stood for a moment "looking  
utterable things" at his conquerors, and at last limped  
ay growling.

"Let him go," said the Captain. "His coat's spoiled,  
d if we fire, all those cattle will swim away."

The hunters waited till the bear had shambled off out  
sight, then crept stealthily forward, hoping to reach  
e edge of the water before their presence was perceived.  
To do this was not so difficult as might appear, for,  
gilant as he is on land, the walrus loses much of his  
ation as soon as he reaches his more natural element,  
ying, as he well may do, on his rapid swimming and  
dy diving. Thus the Englishmen were within an  
sy stone's-throw before the beasts caught sight of  
em. Even when they did, they merely stared patron-  
ngly at the new-comers, as though well aware that  
munition is not so plentiful within the Arctic Circle  
at a sportsman can afford to waste it on game which,  
en killed, is un-get-at-able.

"We've got no harpoons, and no bait to draw the



## A WALRUS HUNT

beggars with," said one of the lieutenants. "What are we going to do?"

A hollow roar from behind them suggested an unlooked-for solution of the problem. The astonished hunters turned their heads, and saw a very large bull-walrus hopping along in their direction, making for either them or the water. Captain Osborn fired and wounded him in the neck, but he still came on, even after a second bullet from the Captain and two from the doctor. This is the less surprising when we remember that, in addition to his very thick skin, a walrus has an undercoat of fat from four to six inches thick.

The animal thus persecuted, hurried, rather than reduced, his speed, and the position threatened to become awkward. Of course, if the sportsmen chose to run, he could never catch them, and probably would not try. But this they were hardly disposed to do, though each man's meagre supply of cartridges might at this rate soon force him to rely on his gun-butt for protection. One of the lieutenants, who had a large-bore single-barrelled gun, fired, and caught the walrus between the eyes, shattering his skull. All the men ran forward to examine the dead beast, and were so taken up with trying to possess themselves of the tusks, that they thought no more of the hundreds—aye, thousands—of walruses which, springing apparently from nowhere, were swimming slowly round within gunshot.

"Hullo! what do you make of this, Captain?" asked one of the hunters, suddenly raising his head and pointing towards the iceberg.

Everybody turned to look, and burst out laughing at a sight that was too grotesque to be alarming. One old

## A WALRUS HUNT

ll, being of an inquisitive turn of mind, had crawled  
t of the water, and was lying just on the edge of the  
. A second, impelled by like curiosity, instead of  
ugging his body side by side with his brother's, was  
nding half out of the water and half in, butting and  
shing at the other beast's hind end, as much as to say,  
"Make room for me." The first walrus was no doubt  
ed to this sort of thing, for, with a grunt, he hopped  
ward a few feet, and the second beast took his place.  
t when a third imitated the second, and a fourth the  
rd, the officers thought it was time to restrain their  
rriment and profit by the unexpected chance which  
fortune had sent them.

The doctor led off, and put a bullet through the eye  
the foremost bull, which died without a groan, but in  
h a position that he formed an excellent rampart to  
creature behind him. Seeing this, the Captain  
lked towards the water-edge, hoping to get in a  
oadside shot at the second beast. This one, how-  
er, had no intention of dying tamely like his brother.  
th a hoarse bellow, which was immediately taken up  
every one of his relations near or distant, till the very  
seemed to be cracking with the thunderous noise, he  
ned towards the little line of hunters which was being  
med parallel to that line of which he was a unit, and,  
a greater rate than his enemies had deemed possible,  
gan to move towards them.

till the men could see nothing especially alarming in  
s, though the third and fourth bulls were showing  
as of a readiness to play at follow-my-leader. But,  
er trying in vain to make his voice heard above the  
oar, the first lieutenant stretched out his arm and

## A WALRUS HUNT

touched the Captain's shoulder with his gunstock, and pointed in their rear.

Things were getting beyond a joke. The same thing was happening behind them as they had been laughing at in front of them a few minutes earlier. A second cordon of walruses were landing, and were unmistakably prepared to avenge the death of their comrades.

The shooting-party had no desire to make a general massacre of the animals. The sledges would not hold more than a few stone of meat, and if each man carried a pair of tusks and a few extra pounds of beef, he would have a burden quite heavy enough. But, then, would the walruses stand by passively and see the tusks removed or a carcass quartered? Even a skilled sealer requires a good deal of time and a good deal of hot water before he can detach a pair of tusks; and here was not a moment of time to spare, and not a drop of hot water, except metaphorically, and in that sense a promise of rather too much.

"Let's draw off a bit," shouted the Captain, making a speaking-trumpet of his hand, and setting the example by taking half a dozen steps farther away from the water. The others followed him, and not a moment too soon, for the leading bull of the second cordon was heading his followers to meet those animals that had already expressed their intention of intercepting the enemy. Reaching a safer spot, they now opened fire again, and two more walruses fell dead, while two others were wounded.

"We mustn't waste any more cartridges," said the Captain ruefully. "We'll get back a bit more, and perhaps they'll clear off and allow us to get what we came for."

## A WALRUS HUNT

The officers retreated again, reloaded their guns, and, not daring to stand still in such intense cold, were forced to jump about or run up and down. Meanwhile the walruses, knowing instinctively that they could not catch their brethren's murderers, and might themselves be in danger if they ventured too far from the water, stopped where they were, glaring savagely at the hunters, and uttering occasional roars.

In this way an hour went by with nothing to show for it, for the hunters were not allowed to approach even the first walrus that had been killed so far from the water; whenever anyone attempted to do so, the bellowing increased, and the animals that had landed began to make a move towards them. At last all lost patience.

"We can't stand here all night to be made fools of," said Osborn. "Come on, doctor; cut this fellow's tusks out, and we'll stand by you to keep the others off."

A general move was made towards the first of the slain, and this time the guardians of the dead offered no resistance. The skull being so shattered, the removal of the first pair of tusks was not such a very lengthy matter, and as one of the sailors who were waiting with the sledges had an axe, he was soon signalled to and a portion of the meat hacked off. Then came the task of securing the second pair of tusks; but no sooner did the ivory-seekers approach the next carcass than two walruses moved towards them.

"Go on; don't take any notice of them," said the Captain, interposing himself between the surgeon and the nearer walrus.

"Back!" shouted the doctor, springing to his feet suddenly. "The ice is going."

## A WALRUS HUNT

It was true. Without an instant's warning, an ice hummock that is washed by the sea will sometime dislodge itself, and woe betide man or bear that happen to be on it, and unable to reach the main block. Happily the cleft was but a yard or two to landward of the walrus on which the doctor was about to operate ; and though there was not time to save the carcass, all had ample opportunity to spring back on to the firm ice where lay the only pair of tusks that, this time, they were to be fortunate enough to secure.



## CHAPTER VI

### ADVENTURES AMONG THE SMALLER WILD BEASTS OF THE NORTH

x, lynx, sable, wolverene, and racoon.—The Arctic fox.—Partridge-shooting under difficulties.—A clever mimic.—The change of coat.—The white fox as a burglar.—A fox-hunter's narrow escape.—Mr. Lord's account of the Canadian lynx.—Lynx-coursing.—An unpleasant situation.—Killing the lynx.—Mr. Lord as a sable-trapper.—Character of the weasel family.—How to trap a sable.—The trapper's worst foe—the wolverene.—A gluttonous and knavish beast.—Caught in the act.—Another peculiarity of the wolverene.—The 'coon.—His virtues and vices.—M. Audubon's account of a 'coon hunt.

For the small wild animals of the North, the best known and the most interesting are the fox, lynx, sable, wolverene, and racoon.

It is to be feared that the fox of the Far North has no higher moral sense than the little animal which exasperates the poultry-farmer and delights the huntsman where at home. In innate cunning and cleverness he probably excels him.

The two commonest varieties are the silver fox of Canada and the Northern States, and the white, blue, or Arctic fox of the Polar Regions. The latter is the smallest and probably the most extraordinary of his tribe. To begin with, he possesses the merit of being without the offensive

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smell that characterizes all other foxes. His most interesting feature, however, is his habit of changing his bluish, dirty-looking summer coat for another that is whitish, and often pure white, as winter comes on. This change is not effected all at once ; there is a transition stage to be gone through, and this accounts for Mr. Peter Dobell's statement that in Kamchatka he met with some little piebald foxes. Mr. Dobell goes on to tell us something of the behaviour of the little creature during summer and autumn.

He was one day shooting in a fir-wood, and having secured one or two partridge-like birds distinguished by their peculiar cry, he pressed on, hoping from the frequency of the cries in the distance to get a good bag. The trees were not so thick as seriously to obstruct his view ; yet, though he looked on all sides of him, he could not see a single bird of any sort. At last the cries sounded quite close to him, not more than a few yards ahead, and on the ground. He stopped and shouted three or four times, hoping to start the birds, but nothing moved, though for a moment the bird notes ceased. He then crept behind a tree and waited patiently for a solution of the mystery. After a few minutes the unexplained calling began again, and this time it was accompanied by a rustling of twigs and pine-needles. Dobell peeped round the tree-trunk, and, to his utter amazement, saw a sharp muzzle and two very bright eyes peering up out of a hole in the earth. In Kamchatka it is not considered by any means a social sin to shoot a fox, and the sportsman made no ceremony about sending a charge of shot at this one ; and the little animal, caught unawares, dropped dead with half his head protruding from his earth.

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Simultaneously with the gun-report there was a rattling and shuffling, and at least twenty different heads, which Dobell had not noticed before, disappeared into their several burrows.

Among his other accomplishments, this fox includes the most marvellous power of imitating, to the life, the cry of the birds on which he feeds, as long as the weather allows him to do so. And it often happens that a fox-colony (or they generally congregate to the number of twenty or thirty families) will between them secure a score of birds in less than half an hour by this manœuvre. This is of course, especially the case in the spring, when the birds are pairing.

By winter time the coat of these foxes has become a mass of downy white fur, so valuable commercially that the days of the whole tribe may be said to be numbered. This winter coat is believed to be absolutely impervious to cold ; but the poor little creatures, though nature has been kind to them as regards raiment, are hard put to it for food during the awful Arctic or sub-arctic winter.

Here all their cleverness is needed, and many a white fox gets a good meal where a less keen-scented or less intelligent animal would starve. Sealers, whalers, and walrus-hunters say that he will sniff out a ship from miles away, and lurk round it like a jackal, for the sake of a meal of seal-meat or offal.

Arctic explorers have sometimes found these foxes very troublesome neighbours. The carpenter of Captain Osborn's ship, and the boatswain mentioned in chapter III., obtained leave for a three-days' hunting excursion, and, having reached a favourable spot for en-

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camping, built a rough temporary hut in which to sleep and deposit their few stores. When they returned on the second evening, they found that the ill-secured door had been forced open, and both men stood hesitating, for more than one hunter in these parts has found a Polar bear in waiting to receive him. No sound whatever issued from the hut, and at last they entered. It was empty—in more than one sense. No unauthorized person was there, but something or somebody had made away with the cold meat which they had left, had demolished a leather game-bag, sundry straps, and a good half of the bearskin rug which formed their bed.

At first they were inclined to attribute this misdeemeanour to the wolves, but the old boatswain, who was somewhat learned in “tracks,” soon proved that much smaller animals were the guilty ones, and both vowed they would take vengeance on the morrow.

Early in the morning, while his mate was still sleeping, the carpenter, Whitfield by name, heard outside the hut a little dry bark, very different from the sound that one associates with wolf or bear. Like prudent old sailors, the two men had been dividing the “watch,” and Whitfield had not the heart to wake the boatswain, who had not long lain down. He therefore stole out with his gun, hoping to catch the offender. This turned out to be an Arctic fox, which, at sight of the carpenter, sped over the snow like lightning, long before aim could be taken at him. Whitfield soon had a chance to notice the tracks of the previous night, and, on comparing them with those of the animal which had just fled, saw that, beyond a doubt, it was a small company of foxes that had made free with their property during their

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sence. These tracks he forthwith followed up, walking and on without paying much attention to either route or distance.

When the old boatswain awoke later and found himself alone, he waited half an hour for his mate's return, and at the end of that time started to follow his footprints. After walking swiftly for about three miles, he came upon some big splashes of blood and bits of white fur, which pointed to the fact that Whitfield had made at least one kill. He walked on a little farther, and, near a rock, picked up a dead fox. In looking about for its owner, he found, to his horror, that Whitfield was sitting with his back to the rock, having fallen a prey to the horrible old stupor that is the Polar traveller's worst foe. Fortunately the boatswain arrived before it was too late, and soon succeeded in restoring the unfortunate man to consciousness.

The carpenter had come upon a fox unawares, had shot him, and on reaching the rock, had stood still for some time to examine the body, and thus had been overcome by a sleep that would have been his last, but for the opportune arrival of the boatswain.

The North is not quite, though very nearly, destitute of representatives of the cat tribe. Here and there a few mountain cats are to be found, while Canada, Scandinavia, and Siberia have one or other of the varieties of the lynx family. These latter, with the exception of the Canadian lynx, do not specially differ from those found in Central Europe or Asia, and the food, habits, and callings of all are practically the same.

Take him all round, the lynx is the least troublesome



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of any of the larger cats. Men and cattle are safe from him, and it is but rarely that he will so far forget himself as to kill a lamb for the sake of sucking its blood. His favourite food consists of rabbits, hares, and birds, and these no sensible agriculturist would grudge him. But of late his skin has become marketable, having found favour in the eyes of the furrier. Also his flesh often forms a meal for the Canadian trapper, the North European farmer, and the Siberian savage.

John Keast Lord describes the lynx of Canada as an awkward, short-legged, stumpy-tailed animal about three feet in length. Among the trappers he is known as *le loup cervier*, or simply *le chat*. Mr. Lord, while leading the life of a trapper, often had occasion to hunt the lynx, and once or twice succeeded in taking one alive. At first he tried setting traps for him, but these were a dead failure; for, despite his awkwardness, the lynx is both agile and light of foot, and in every instance he succeeded in smelling out and avoiding the trap, and in some cases actually ran away with the bait.

On one occasion Lord followed the track of a lynx that had thus piled insult on injury, accompanied by a half-wild Indian dog. On the edge of a clearing they came suddenly upon the animal peacefully enjoying a bird which he had captured. Suddenly he smelt the dog, and, with one quick glance behind, bounded across the clearing. "Bounded" expresses literally the lynx's method of covering the ground; for when pursued he curves his back like an angry cat, tucks his little legs under him, and makes a spring, seeming to fall with all four feet in a bunch; and no sooner does he touch the earth than he is up and forward again like a bouncing-

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1. But in this case he had not sufficient start, and did not the sense to double among the trees again, so that in a minute the dog had headed him off. The lynx, finding himself stopped, sprang backwards, spitting and growling like a tormented tabby, while the dog stood with feet and legs stretched out, barking savagely, but not seeming to care about the task of seizing an animal as big as himself.

Lord had no such scruples. He was a powerful man as well as an experienced "vet," and running as fast as his legs would carry him, he had come within six feet of the prisoner before the latter seemed aware of his presence. Suddenly turning his head, the lynx caught sight of him, and either actually with the intention of flying at him, or else because he thought he stood more chance of getting past the man than the dog, he appeared to make a pivot of his four feet, and, swinging round on this, gave a leap that landed his nose against the trapper's shins. The dog, no doubt a well-meaning beast, jumped almost simultaneously in the same direction, and man and dog and lynx tumbled one over the other, and "in wild confusion mingled there."

A burning sensation in one of his hands told Lord that the lynx had not escaped, for the claws of one of the beast's feet were embedded in his flesh. To let an ill-trained dog kill an animal whose skin is valuable is probably to ruin that skin. Not losing his presence of mind, the hunter hissed off the dog, and, without rising from his knees, clenched the fist that was free, and delivered a "knock-out" blow on the head of the *loup cervier* which stunned him, if it did not kill him outright.

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A far more valuable fur than the lynx's, which it was to Mr. Lord's interest to secure as often as possible, was that of the sable, a little animal of the weasel tribe. In the pursuit of this he found two serious hindrances—the lynx and, far worse, the glutton or wolverene. Not that the lynx will often of his own free will attack sable marten, mink, or any of the family ; but any reader who has had to do with ferrets or stoats knows that the whole tribe of them are blood-thirsty little animals that will attack or kill for the love of shedding blood. And so they sometimes force on a quarrel with a beast which is more than a match for them.

This was now and then the case with the sables. One of them, on being disturbed by an inquisitive lynx, would show fight, the result being that, instead of finding a sable in his trap, and of shooting a lynx whose skin was worth that expenditure of powder, Lord would not infrequently find a very much damaged lynx limping along half dead from loss of blood, and, not far away, a mangled little corpse, whose fur, instead of being worth a five-pound note, was almost unrecognizable.

To trap the sable was not particularly difficult, but to do so without injuring his skin or else, offering a meal to the first wolverene that chanced to come along, was a less easy matter. As a rule, Lord found it necessary to follow the Russian and Japanese trick of pursuing the little animal to his hole, putting a net over it, and "smoking him out." But among the Indians he found many men clever enough to lasso the sable by means of a running noose of sinew.

Nowadays these little creatures have become so scarce that fabulous prices are paid for genuine skin.

## WILD BEASTS OF THE NORTH

Towards the wolverene Lord soon learned that he could not afford to be merciful. This is a dark-coated beast, about three feet long, and seems to be a connecting link between the weasels and the bears ; at all events, it possesses the objectionable qualities of both these families, and is a scourge to the trapper and the farmer. It is said that the wolverene sometimes makes a meal for a bear ; if so, it only gets its deserts.

Like many another trapper before and since, Lord found that this annoying beast would follow him unseen while he was setting his traps, and, as often as not, when he came to inspect, more than half of them had been sprung. Sometimes, in a line of traps extending for five miles, not a single sable or marten or fox was to be found, though in almost every case the trap had certainly been sprung. Strangely enough, when poisoned meat was left lying about to attract the wolverene's attention, it was almost always found untouched.

The animals thus taken from the gins were not all devoured, though the " glutton " has not gained his name undeservedly, for in captivity he will eat four pounds of meat at a meal, and many have been known to account for twelve and thirteen pounds a day. Generally the spare food was put by against a rainy day, and once or twice Mr. Lord was fortunate enough to discover the private hoard of one of these pests.

But the wolverenes were not content to steal and hide just the contents of the traps. Often Lord found that household utensils from his hut were missing. Once he lost a tobacco-pouch and a powder-flask ; another time a couple of tin mugs disappeared from outside his hut. One of the latter he found weeks afterwards, buried under



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some dead sticks. For no jackdaw, whether of Rheims or elsewhere, can be a more mischievous thief than the glutton.

Perhaps Mr. Lord's most interesting and amusing experience with this beast was when, while one day inspecting his traps, he came suddenly within sight of a glutton busily engaged in dragging a small silver fox out of a gin. The thief's back was turned to him, and the wind happened to be blowing towards the trapper, so that he got very nearly within fifty paces before the sound of his footsteps betrayed him.

As Lord raised his gun the animal turned round and stared inquisitively at him, deliberately shading his eyes with one of his fore-paws ; and this yielding to curiosity cost him his life.

Another animal which also may be said to be related to both bear and weasel, though infinitely less objectionable, is the racoon. He is not exclusively a Northern animal, for even the Northern racoon is found as far South as the Gulf of Mexico, though perhaps he is seen at his best in Alaska and Canada. In size he is a trifle smaller than the common fox ; his prevailing colour is grey-brown, and a peculiar black marking round the eyes and nose gives him a distinctly disreputable, prize-fighting appearance. His tail is rather handsome, being bushy, and striped alternately black and grey. He is playful, lazy, and a first-class hand at opening oysters. These he bites through at the hinge, and finishes the operation with his hind-claws. He is, moreover, remarkably cleanly in his habits, and, either from cleanliness or perpetual thirst, washes all his food in water whenever circumstances



## WILD BEASTS OF THE NORTH

low ; indeed, the German word for racoon is *Waschbär* (‘ washing bear ’).

If he has a vice apart from a certain amount of vindictiveness, it is a very pronounced liking for intoxicating drink, and there is no surer way of taming a ’coon than by offering him rum or sweet wine.

M. Audubon, the celebrated scientist, has given a graphic description of the hunting of one of these creatures which he witnessed. Such hunts are carried on at night, or during the day the animal is generally to be found fast asleep, coiled up in a tree. This particular animal was out on his night search for food when he was aware of a crowd of men and dogs pursuing him. One of the men carried a torch, by the light of which they could follow the dogs, which had lost no time in getting on the scent of the animal.

The ’coon vanished, and so very soon did the dogs, though their angry baying soon betrayed their whereabouts. Guided by the noise the dogs were making, the sportsmen hurried on, and at last found the whole pack barking madly round the foot of a tree.

Sticks and chips were soon gathered, and in a few minutes a roaring fire was blazing under the tree. By its light a negro swarmed up, and discovered the ’coon’s whereabouts, from which he speedily dislodged him. Frightened and furious, the poor beast sprang down from the tree, and, before the dogs could get at him, was off again at top speed, and once more beyond sight of the hunters. Following, as before, the barking of the hounds, Audubon and his companions at last came to a second stop. This time, instead of taking to a tree, the coon had sought refuge in a shallow pool, where, half standing, half

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swimming, he was pluckily awaiting the combined onslaught of the dogs. These did not allow for the extreme flexibility of body which the animal possesses. Anyone who has seen a badger baited will understand how it is that a racoon is no sooner seized by the back of the neck than his teeth are in the ear or throat of the dog that has taken that liberty.

The same sort of thing happened on this occasion. One dog caught him by the haunches, another by the tail, and a third by the neck ; but one and all were glad enough to leave go again, and to fall away yelping with pain. But even a 'coon cannot bite twenty dogs at once, and by the time his teeth were firmly engaged on one of them, the rest bore him down, and one of the hunters put him out of his misery with a blow on the head.

## CHAPTER VII

### SHOOTING THE MUSK-OX

A link between sheep and cattle.—The home of the musk-ox.—Proportion of males to females.—Behaviour towards man.—Adventure of Lieutenant Cresswell, R.N.—Oxen that climb like goats.—Stalking the game.—A slippery hill-path.—Death of the first bull.—Pursued by the second bull.—A rocky descent.—Hemmed in.—A narrow escape.—Sir James Ross as a hunter.—Tracking the ox.—The ox baited by dogs and arrows.—Taking shelter behind a rock.—Cool pluck of Commander Ross.—Poo-yet-tah's novel method of slaying a musk-ox.

THE musk-ox is considered by most people to be a link between sheep and oxen, and his appearance is certainly in favour of that theory. His legs are considerably shorter than those of our domestic cattle, and his body is covered with a perfect mat of long, woolly hair, so that at a distance he might reasonably be taken for an enormous English ram. His hair is of a rich brown colour, and his horns, the roots of which are joined in the centre of the forehead, sweep gracefully downwards, almost as low as the under side of his neck, then give a sudden hook-like curve upwards again. In general demeanour he is mild, even stupid, looking, and does not at all seem to bear out the character for viciousness that Arctic explorers one and all have given him.

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Nowadays he is seldom found far from the barren lands of quasi-Arctic Canada or the ice-fields of Greenland, though at one time he was distributed over the greater part, if not the whole, of the Polar Regions. His name arises, of course, from the peculiar musk odour that clings to him, and that more or less taints his flesh—sometimes to such a degree that to civilized man the taste is unendurable.

More often than not these strange-looking cattle live in small herds, sometimes of not more than twenty individuals, and never more than a hundred ; and in these herds the proportion of bulls to cows is rarely greater than one to ten. This latter fact confirms what many Arctic travellers have observed for themselves, or been told by the Eskimos—that at the commencement of the breeding season the bulls are so ferocious, as well as determined to possess as large a harem as possible, that they attack each other without mercy ; and so prolonged and uncompromising are these conflicts, that only the strongest bulls ever survive them.

Their attitude towards man is, as usual, one of fear, and if they do not immediately flee at his approach (and they generally do), it is less from courage than from ingrained dullness of apprehension. At the same time, they are among the very few wild beasts that show no terror at powder and shot, for the reason, zoologists say, that the flash and the report are considered by them as purely natural phenomena, like thunder and lightning. When at last it dawns upon their slow intelligence that the noisy two-legged animal that is pursuing them wants to hurt them, then they will turn on him quickly enough, exhibiting all the fury and strength of the bison, coupled

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with the speed, activity, and sureness of foot of the mountain-goat. This, at least, was the opinion, founded on personal experience, of Lieutenant Cresswell, one of Sir Robert McClure's officers.

The Lieutenant had strayed away from a hunting-party made up of some of the ship's officers, and seeing from a distance what he thought to be a herd of some peculiar kind of goat, he proceeded at a brisk pace towards the spot. At closer quarters he soon discovered his mistake, for, though these were the first musk-oxen he had yet met with, he easily recognized them from the descriptions he had heard. Creeping along with greater care than was really necessary, he had arrived within tolerably easy gunshot, when, to his chagrin, the whole herd, consisting of three bulls and about five-and-twenty cows, began to move on at a quick walk towards a group of barren hills, low, but dotted here and there with ugly overhanging crags, and seamed with narrow, slippery paths that generations of musk-oxen had worn with their hoofs.

Not to be outdone, Cresswell quickened his pace to a run, and by the time the herd had reached the higher ground, he found himself at the foot of a gently sloping path, up which he could walk without much difficulty. Plodding impatiently up, he at length reached the summit, only to find that the animals were nowhere to be seen. He paused for breath, and was examining the loading of his gun, when a gentle lowing ahead made him press forward across a cup-like hollow to a second ridge, equal in height to the one which he had just climbed. Clambering up on his hands and knees—for here the ground was too slippery to allow of ordinary walking—he was at last able to peer over the far ridge. Then he gave



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a gasp of astonished satisfaction. The herd, following some other path as yet unknown to him, had been making for the lower ground beyond the hills, and now had broken up into small parties of five and six, one of which was grazing on the slope beneath, not twenty yards away from him.

Ignorant of their climbing capacities, he deemed himself quite safe from any reprisals on their part, and, knowing that one or two shots from his gun would soon bring either one of his fellow-hunters or one of the men from the ship, who would help him against odds or to carry home the game, he took careful aim at the only bull of the little group and fired. The ball took the animal in the chest, and he fell forward, then rolled down the slope, at the foot of which he lay motionless.

The Lieutenant reloaded, and then saw that the cows—distinguishable by their horns being wider apart and less curved—had made a stampede down the hill after their prostrate lord. Having made a brief inspection of the carcass, they wheeled away to the left, and were immediately lost behind a projecting hill-side.

Seeing himself now alone with the bull, Cresswell began carefully to descend the icy slope, preparatory to examining and skinning his prize. But easy as the descent had seemed to be, he soon found that, unless he was prepared to toboggan down to the bottom, and probably land there with a broken leg, he must abandon the slope in favour of the step-like ledges and crags of rock to his left—a longer, but indisputably safer, mode of descent. Following this plan—a proceeding to which, in the end, he owed his life—he had come within twelve or fourteen feet of the level, when there sounded a scraping, scuttling

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oise some distance above his head. Expecting to see one of the sailors who had been attracted by his gun, he paused on the brink of a little stone platform and looked up leisurely. And there, surefooted as a wild ass, he saw coming towards him at a smart, regular trot another of the bulls, own brother, in point of size, to the one he had just shot. There could be no two opinions as to whether the animal meant mischief : a column of vapour gushed like a puff of smoke from each nostril ; the head, naturally lower than the rest of the body while on the slope, now almost touched the ground, while the body appeared to distend visibly as the long hairs quivered and bristled with rage, and the eyes looked like two spots of flame. The Lieutenant had seen an enraged bull in his own country, and, though smaller, this animal most unpleasantly reminded him of a brute which he had seen kill three big dogs in two minutes. Happily for his own peace of mind, Cresswell still had but little knowledge of the immense activity of the musk-ox, and, confident that a spring across a little chasm on his left hand, on to a broader ledge, would put him out of reach of the bull, he leapt lightly over it.

The ox was not coming so swiftly but that he could check himself, and, seeing the man's manœuvre, he made no to-do about jumping sideways across a similar chasm higher up. Certainly this brought him only inappreciably nearer to the object of his pursuit, but it established the fact that Cresswell could not hope to beat him as a mountaineer. Moreover, the bull had now only to jump a second chasm to be in a direct line with the fugitive.

There was no time for further hesitation, for now a bare ten yards separated the two, and, bringing his gun

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to the shoulder, the Lieutenant fired. The bullet caught the animal somewhere in the fore-quarter, but it did not affect his pace, though Cresswell could swear that the woolly coat was dyed with blood. He jerked out the spent cartridge and slipped another in its place, and this time aimed for the animal's right eye. Usually the Lieutenant was an excellent shot, but on this occasion there was certainly an error of judgment, for the ball struck the thick ridge of horn that stretched like a frontlet across the beast's head, and, beyond splintering the tough substance and causing the bull to half stop and scowl at the shooter, it had little effect.

There was yet time to reload, but as Cresswell was about to take aim, the ox seemed to lash himself into sudden fury, and came blundering downhill till he was level with the hunter, and only the narrow cleft separated them.

There was just this one point—an important one, too—in the Lieutenant's favour: the bull had no room to turn, and could only jump sideways, and, on landing on the opposite ledge, the worst he could do, not being able to bring head or feet into play, would be to crush the hunter with his body against the upright face of the rocks to which he was backing.

Snorting and bellowing, the animal made a vicious sideward jerk with his head at the enemy, but could not reach him in that manner, and, before he could withdraw it again, the quick-witted sailor had brought his gun-muzzle to the level of the animal's eye and fired, this time with such effect that only by a spring to one side could he prevent the carcass from falling on him. At the same moment a shrill whistle came from the top of

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the ridge, and, looking up, Cresswell saw that at last his shots had attracted notice, for two of his brother-officers were gaily waving their rifles in congratulation of his lucky escape.

On the level the musk-ox can be just as formidable an assailant as on the hills, as an adventure which chanced to a far better known Arctic explorer, Sir James Ross, will show.

Sir James (then Commander) Ross, while frost-bound in the ice-deserts of Boothia, was out on a foraging expedition, accompanied by one Poo-yet-tah, a clever little Eskimo hunter, who was famed for his shrewdness in tracking the musk-ox. It was not long before they discovered the footprints of one of these animals, and when they had followed the trail scrupulously for an hour or so, they all at once came upon newer hoof-marks—those of an ox that could only have passed along a few hours earlier. Immediately they let loose the dogs which they had brought with them, and these set off so riskily that they were soon out of sight. For several hours the two men followed the footprints across the dreary, rugged waste, and at last, when they were almost ready to drop from fatigue, they heard from the far side of a belt of rocks the excited barking of the dogs.

Forgetful now of weariness or hunger, Ross ran forward, accompanied and easily outstripped by the Eskimo, to the spot where a bull of unusual size was being held at bay. As soon as he was within bow-shot, Poo-yet-tah sent an arrow at the animal, which struck, but did not pierce, his ribs; and the lordly creature, quite unaffected by it, continued his fruitless attempts at ridding himself of his four-legged persecutors—fruitless because, in



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whatever direction he turned, the dogs fastened their teeth in his hind-legs, and when, harried beyond endurance, he shook them off and rounded on them, they had dodged round to his heels once more, long before he could strike at them with his horns.

Meanwhile Poo-yet-tah patiently continued to shoot his arrows, hitting the musk-ox every time, but not severely enough to attract his attention, insomuch that Ross, who had now come up with his companion, wondered how the little man could ever have killed the number of bulls of which he boasted. Seeing the officer not present his gun, the Eskimo ceased shooting, and waited tremblingly to see what would happen.

At fifteen yards the Captain gave the bull both barrels. Both shots struck him. The animal stopped, swerved, and then fell—but only for a moment; the next he was on his feet again, and making for his new foe, who had but bare time to dodge behind a conveniently adjacent rock. He came thundering on across the hard-frozen snow, head down and nostrils dilated, and charged at the rock so violently that the concussion sent him backwards to the ground with a thud that could have been heard several yards away.

Poo-yet-tah leapt forward, knife in hand, but was soon glad to seek shelter again behind the dogs, for, after a moment's breathing space, the ox was on his feet again streaming with blood and foam, and butting wildly in every direction.

By this time Ross had reloaded his gun under cover of the rock, and now came forward, endeavouring to get a more certain aim, which endeavour the dogs seemed bent on balking. Leaving them to take their chance





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Ross had reloaded his gun under cover of the rock, and endeavoured to get a shot at the ox, but was continually balked by the dogs.



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being shot, he was at last on the point of firing, when the bull, turning, caught sight of him, and realizing that he was the most formidable of his foes, scattered the dogs in all directions, and with renewed vigour charged at the commander.

And this time there was no kindly rock at hand, should the gun fail to do its work. With his finger on the trigger Ross awaited, with all the calmness which the situation allowed him, the nearer approach of the infuriated ox, whose every stride was a step nearer to death for one of the two. Then, at five yards, he fired with both barrels, and the bull dropped, his heart pierced and his shoulder knocked to splinters.

Half mad with joy and excitement, Poo-yet-tah threw himself on the carcass, scarcely able to believe his eyes at sight of the bullet-holes and the broken shoulder, for he had never till this day seen a gun fired. But there was no time to spare for admiration of the white man's skill. Scarcely stopping to quench his thirst with a mixture of blood and melted snow, the native set himself to skin and quarter the body; for in those latitudes shortly after death skin, muscle, bones, and bloodvessels all become one hard, impenetrable mass. After packing up as much of the beef as they could carry, the two men built a snow-hut over the remainder, and then hurried back in search of the companions whom Ross had left some miles behind. And that night all made a hearty meal of musk-ox beef, which at that season of the year was free from all objectionable taint.

Poo-yet-tah's passion for hunting was now thoroughly aroused, and the next morning, before anyone else was stirring, he was off on the track of another ox. Late in

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the afternoon he returned, bearing with him as much beef as one man could possibly carry; and Ross, after his experience of the previous day, was not unnaturally curious as to how the little man could have killed one of these powerful beasts with the miserable weapons at his command.

The Eskimo had, following the custom of his people, pursued the beast and driven it on before him by keeping the dogs in leash, and encouraging them to bark their loudest. Steadily watching for, and taking advantage of every accident of ground or position, Poo-yet-tah had patiently kept on the heels of the ox, and had at last succeeded in driving him down a precipice, just as the African jackal kills the antelope or deer which he is pursuing. This is only another of the many instances that can be quoted of savage man's ingenuity in dealing with those animals which are too powerful to be met by his unaided strength, or by the rude weapons which represent his highest notion of mechanical art.

## CHAPTER VIII

### LIONS AND LION-HUNTING

the cat tribe.—The lion.—His character.—The stock-breeder's enemy.—The lion of North Africa.—Adventures of the Richardson expedition.—A lion-trap that did not work.—Another that did.—The Asiatic and Nubian lion.—Dr. Werne's Nile expedition.—Pursuing a lion on mule-back.—Gallantry of a young sheikh.—Another lion-trap.—Terrible experience of an Arab servant.—Pursuing the culprit.—Off the track.—Werne cornered by a lion.—A bad shot.—The doctor's life saved by his servant.—Mr. Steedman's adventures in the South African wilds.—A leonine epicure.—A herd of springbok "held up" by a lion.—Sudden attack by a lioness.—An unloaded gun.—Pinned down by a lioness.—Scaring off the enemy.

HERETO we have had little opportunity of discussing wild beasts of the cat tribe, for these—with perhaps the exception of a few mountain cats—are rarely found in the Northern Hemisphere. Such animals usually prefer a warmer climate. Even the domestic tabby likes the sun better than the shade, and the hearthrug better than any other quarter of the room. The members of this family, whether lion or lynx, tiger or tortoiseshell, are nearly all alike in their main characteristics—the ability to see in the dark, the possession of hooked and retractile claws, and an inordinate appetite for flesh and meat.

In muscular strength and beauty of outline the lion



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undoubtedly holds first place among his kind, and it with a sort of regret that we read in our natural history that the handsome beast is now rarely met with except in Africa, and that "our children will scarcely know him except from books."

His ferocity and his courage perhaps only exist in proportion to the needs of his stomach. Buffon, writing really more as a theorist and a man of letters, gives us a magnificent word-picture of the lion's bravery and generosity. Livingstone, on the other hand, who spoke from wide personal experience, says, in so many words, that the noble animal is a skulking, cowardly bully, and one can find only too many travellers and tried hunters ready to support the missionary doctor's statement. That he fears to attack man, unless provoked by hunger or other causes, is now generally established as a fact, and there is little doubt that the care which the lioness takes to conceal her young is to prevent their sires' making a meal of them. At the same time, an animal that will fight and slay the African or Asiatic buffalo can scarcely be entirely wanting in courage.

In his dealings with man he is to be regarded less as an enemy to life and limb than as a stealer of his substance. Fifty years ago the South African Boer, the Abyssinian herdsman, and the Arab dealer in mules or camels, were all groaning under his depredations among their flocks, so it is hardly surprising that men should set their wits to work to exterminate such a pest. Jules Gérard, the famous "tueur des lions," estimated that in the fifties each North African lion was killing on an average about £250 worth of cattle, horses, camels, and sheep every year. And lions were not scarce in those days, for

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James Richardson, the companion of Barth and Over-  
g, speaks of passing a granite mountain in the Sahara  
which was "swarming" with the terrible brutes.  
It is from this heroic explorer that we learn something  
of the curious methods of lion-trapping among the Arabs  
and Touaregs of Northern Africa. Accompanied by a  
Leikh and his retinue, Richardson's expedition was  
making a painfully slow march southwards across the  
Sahara, often being detained for several days or weeks  
in one spot. Daylight and dark were alike wearisome  
to the explorers: by day the terrific heat and the con-  
stantly recurring arguments, squabbles, and skirmishes  
with the natives; by night the excessive cold and the  
ever-present danger from the lions that prowled round  
the camp. From a sporting point of view Richardson's  
experiences among the lions were disappointing. If one  
of them showed himself by day, he would not venture  
within gunshot, and when at night the Englishman  
went outside the camp, the marauder that had terrified  
the inmates by his roaring always seemed to have dis-  
appeared. True, his friend Heinrich Barth one day  
pursued a small travelling family of the creatures some  
miles from the camp, but succeeded in killing nothing  
more formidable than a jerboa.  
And still the nocturnal roarings and thefts continued.  
In one night a goat was carried off; on another a mule  
was killed and half devoured. Whatever may be said  
of his courage, the lion has plenty of sagacity and cunning.  
There is method in his roarings. When he cannot find  
prey to hand he puts his head down to the ground and  
howls with all his might, knowing full well that the  
noise, being so near the earth, will be refracted and

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dispersed, so that it will be difficult for the hearer to decide from what quarter it has come. Thus an animal that is snugly hidden away will spring out, thinking the noise is close to him, and will eventually run straight into the very danger he is trying to avoid.

The Arabs seemed rather horrified at the idea of boldly facing the foe with powder and ball, and Richardson was not a little surprised when, on the afternoon following the death of the mule, the sheikh entered his tent and begged the loan of "a gun that would slay a lion." The Englishman willingly granted the request, and taking up a second gun, prepared to follow the Arab.

"One gun will be ample," observed the latter. "Come and see;" and he led the way, not to a lion hunt, but to a spot outside the camp where lay the carcass of a camel that had that morning died of old age. Round the dead beast stood a score of Arabs busily constructing an enclosure of thorns, and whatever moderately stout wood that part of the desert afforded.

"To-night we shall kill the lion," observed the sheikh with great pride, and went on to explain how. The enclosure was a trap, the camel the bait, the gun the instrument of death.

By the time the Arabs had worked for a couple of hours as briskly as their constitution will allow, a stout square hedge, twelve feet high, surrounded the defunct camel; but on one side was a narrow aperture, just large enough to allow of the passage of the lion's body. In this the gun was hung, muzzle outwards, two or three feet from the ground, and secured by ropes to prevent its swinging. An extra cord was now tied to the trigger, passed over a horizontal pole fixed within the enclosure, then brought

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ward again over a second bar. To the end of this line a substantial joint of meat was fastened, so securely that any considerable force would free it ; and the force that was applied at the meat would, the sapient sheikh pointed out, be sufficient to pull the trigger, to the immediate inconvenience of the lion.

It was an exciting time for everybody as evening drew

The Europeans, poor fellows ! were only too glad of any trifling event that would break the dismal monotony of their environment. Darkness came ; so did the lion, and his rumbling roar made the more timid Arabs quake as they huddled round the fire. There came a sudden snarl ; then another ; then a sharp click, plainly audible to the breathless watchers ; another silence, another snarl ; then—nothing. Richardson and Overweg started up, gun in hand, and rushed towards the trap, heedless of a warning cry from the sheikh ; and they arrived just in time to see the dim outline of a lion disappearing in the gloom. Too many cooks had spoiled the broth. They had forgotten to load the gun, and the thief had marched off triumphant with the joint, which he had torn from its moorings.

Better luck, however, where lion-trapping was concerned, awaited the explorers a little farther south. Here the natives were more practical, less cowardly, and less trifling ; and the first night a lion dared to visit the camp he was snared without trouble or ceremony. A live lion had been suspended from a rope that stretched between the tops of a couple of tents, at too great a height for the average lion to reach it by springing. The savage visitant, robbed of this customary caution by the press of hunger, leapt recklessly at the bait, only to miss



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it by about a foot, and to fall headlong into a pit prepared for him. Here, when morning came, the entrapped "king of beasts" was exposed to the hooting and missile of everybody in the camp, was knocked silly with sticks and stones, and would have been left to die of wound and starvation but for a merciful bullet from the gun of one of the Europeans.

Some naturalists have drawn attention to special points of difference between the North, Mid, and South African lion; but for our present purpose it will be sufficient to regard him as essentially the same, and to say that the Asiatic lion, now seldom seen, only differs from him in possessing but a rudimentary mane, and in being of a somewhat lighter shade of colour.

Nile explorers have often found a terrible foe in the lion of Nubia and Abyssinia; and Dr. Ferdinand Werne, a Prussian Vice-Consul at Alexandria, whose journey to the source of the White Nile rendered him famous in the 'forties, has many interesting stories of his adventures with this animal. Like all other carnivorous beasts, the lion reaches almost his highest pitch of fierceness when he is in danger of being robbed of a meal; but once let him get firm hold of that meal, and he will scuttle away with it, even if only pursued by a child, as nimbly as a cat or dog that has stolen a mutton-chop; and nothing short of a determined attack in the rear will make him drop his prey and do battle for it. Dr. Werne gives us a good illustration of this fact.

While he and his Arab followers were encamped at some distance from the river bank, a full-grown lion suddenly appeared from nowhere in particular, made a dash at the cattle-pen, seized a good-sized calf, and,





### A PLUCKY SHEIKH

A lion seized and carried off a good-sized calf. A young sheikh, mounted on a mule, and armed with only a spear, followed, and transfixes the brute in mid-air as it was springing at him.



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regardless of the badly aimed knives, stones, and bullets that were launched at him, coolly leapt over a fence nearly ten feet high, and, calf in mouth, trotted away. This may sound like a "traveller's tale," but naturalists of our own day give even more astounding instances of the animal's immense strength.

A young sheikh at once sprang on to his mule, and, armed only with a lance, rode in pursuit of the thief. The race was unequal, for the rider was expert and slightly tilt, the mule fresh and swift, while the lion was hampered with a burden almost equal in weight to that which the mule carried ; and before he had gone half a mile, his pursuer was nearly abreast of him.

But a mule is not an ideal mount for lion-hunting. Just as the sheikh was within touching distance, the obstinate little beast jibbed, shied, and, with a less skilled rider, would have lain down and rolled. Maddened at seeing his quarry escaping, the plucky hunter jumped from the ground and, continuing the chase on foot, stabbed the lion in the haunch with his lance-point. The animal took a few strides forward, which freed him from the weapon ; then, dropping his burden, turned on his pursuer. A cry of terror rose from the spectators who had followed, were still within the camp, and as they shouted, the lion, with a furious yell, crouched for a spring. But the little sheikh skipped lightly to one side, and while the brute was in the air, drove his lance clean through the great tawny body, then stood calmly watching hisretched victim writhing in the death agony, as though nothing out of the ordinary had occurred.

In various parts of the Soudan, Werne found lion-traps generally constructed on a more elaborate scale than those

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seen by Richardson. The most interesting of these was an ambush rather than a trap. A deep hole was dug at the edge of a narrow path known to be frequented by lions, and in this three or four men, armed with flint-locks and lances, stood upright. A close network of stout poles was then laid across the top, and over it a large joint of meat. No sooner did the luckless lion pause to inspect this than the protruding musket-barrels emptied a shower of lead into him ; and while he sought to get at his foes, he was rapidly dispatched by the lance-points from below.

In Abyssinia, Werne was to meet with his most exciting lion adventure. Early one morning shouts and shrieks from the Arab followers called him from the camp, outside of which he found one of his servants lying lacerated and bleeding, and just recovering from a swoon. The bystanders said they had come up in time to drive away a lion that had seized the unlucky fellow by the shoulder and was apparently about to make a meal of him. The Arab's own account of his awful experience is very similar to that which Livingstone some years later gave of his feelings under similar circumstances. After the first momentary pain caused by the brute's claws he was conscious of nothing, for the lion shook him so furiously that he became half stupefied, and then insensible.

Accompanied by his body-servant and the young sheikh who had already distinguished himself as a hunter, Werne started to follow the track of the assailant, and this was soon found to lead to a tangled mass of brush-wood which formed the edge of a small forest. Unused to woodland hunting, the three men now had the greatest difficulty in tracing the lion, and were soon altogether off

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the scent. Just then a female elephant and her young  
came into an appearance, and Sale, Werne's servant,  
pointed his gun at the smaller animal. Aware of the  
uncomfortable consequences of robbing a mother elephant  
of her little one, the German prudently knocked up the  
barrel, and the charge flew harmlessly in the air, while,  
apparently, the elephants took flight, startled by the shot.  
This incident, and Werne's subsequent reprimand to  
Sale, drove away all thought of lions from the minds of  
the hunters, and the sheikh, for want of other amusement,  
began to blaze away at the gaudy-coloured birds that  
hopped from tree to tree. And now that every one was  
heedlessly off his guard, there was a sudden rustle in the  
undergrowth, and out sprang a lion—if not the one they  
were in search of, at least a companion quite as un-  
desirable. There he stood, lashing his tail and snarling,  
not more than five yards from the nearest man, who  
happened to be Werne.

The doctor, though no coward, felt his hand trembling  
nervously as he aimed his gun at the terrible vision before  
him. So unstrung was he, in fact, that, when he fired,  
the bullet went wide, and his second barrel was not  
loaded. But this was better than if he had slightly  
wounded his adversary. The lion, mystified rather than  
further enraged, stood with tail erect, and glared at the  
unfortunate explorer, then half turned his head in the  
direction of the sheikh, who, some distance away, was  
making considerable clatter in loading his ponderous  
matchlock, which he had discharged just as the lion put  
in an appearance. From that quarter there was evidently  
no hope for Werne, and his man Sale had disappeared as  
completely as though the earth had swallowed him.



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Werne let fall his gun, and stealthily pulled a small double-barrelled pistol from his belt ; there was just a hope that it might avail him at close quarters. He may be pardoned for shuddering at the thought of how very close those quarters might soon be. Made reckless by the horrible suspense, he took a couple of steps forward. As he did so, the long coarse grass just in front of him rustled and waved ever so slightly, as though stirred by the passage of a snake ; then came a loud report, and the lion fell dead. Sale, at the first sight of him, had dropped behind a bush, and, distrusting his aim, had crept as noiselessly as an Indian to short range, and so had saved his master's life.

A not altogether dissimilar adventure befell an English sportsman, Mr. Andrew Steedman, who, about the same time, was wandering in the South African wilds, buck-hunting, with a friend named Thackwray.

As the Rev. J. G. Wood has pointed out, the lion is somewhat of an epicure in his way, when circumstances permit, preferring not only certain animals, but certain parts of those animals, and the eland and the springbok, gemsbok and blessbok, are dainties that he cannot resist. Steedman had just brought down a fine buck, and the two friends were strolling towards where the animal had fallen, when a lion bounded from behind a hillock, and, ignoring the two men, swooped down on the dead buck. The hunters crept cautiously forward till they reached a large boulder, from behind which they could shoot in comparative safety. Then, looking out from their hiding-place, they were astonished to see that their intended victim, instead of tearing his prey and glutting himself, was coolly and patiently ripping the body open

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with his claws. This done, His Majesty tore out and devoured, first the heart and lungs, then the liver; and, having appeased his hunger, was moving languidly away.

"He's left the best for us, at any rate," said Thackwray, taking aim at the departing beast, which, the next moment, fell dead with a bullet in his heart.

Leaving the bodies to the care of their servants, the two friends moved on, and presently came in sight of what in those days was not altogether uncommon—a herd of seven or eight thousand springboks, "packed together as thick as locusts." To shoot, and at fairly close range, at such a body was the reverse of sportsmanlike; and the young fellows held their fire, waiting either till one or two of the animals should separate themselves from the main bulk, or till some worthier mark for a bullet should appear. They had not long to wait, for another lion sprang between them and the bucks, and promptly "held up" the whole herd.

Thackwray, whose lion-hunting had till lately been confined to North Africa, seemed surprised at a second lion's appearing so near to the first; and herein lies a great difference between the lion of the North and that of the South. In Algeria and the Sahara there are few large animals, and the lion, having established a home for himself, "has it all his own way"; and, as a rule, makes no trouble of keeping other beasts, whether of his own species or another, at a distance. In Southern Africa, however, where elephants, rhinoceroses, giraffes, and buffaloes abound, he cannot afford to be independent, and is forced to combine and "go shares."

Steedman gave the interloper both barrels, and cut

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short his career, while the swift-footed springboks, alarmed by the double report, fled in all directions.

The hunters now walked across to inspect the dead animal—a fine beast, measuring nearly eight feet from muzzle to buttock. Thackwray was carefully making notes when, with no warning—not so much as a growl—a lioness—probably the widow—sprang over a milk-bush, and the next moment was standing over the now prostrate Thackwray. So little noise had she made that Steedman, who had turned aside to light his cigar, knew nothing of what had happened till, startled by his chum's cry, he looked round and saw the gruesome sight. He was about to take aim, when the horrible thought occurred to him that his gun had not yet been recharged. He was new to African life at that time, but we may be sure that he never again fired a shot without at once reloading.

The fact that the average lion is afraid of a human being is illustrated by his demeanour when standing over a man. Where he would instantly tear an animal with teeth and claws, he almost invariably stands over the man, merely holding him prisoner, from which position he may often be scared by the advent of another human being.

The lioness did after her kind ; her weight had forced the young fellow, face downwards, to the ground, but beyond preventing him from rising, she made no immediate attempt at further assault. Steedman cast a longing glance at his friend's loaded gun, which lay useless at his side ; to try to reach it would mean certain death for one of them. To reload his own weapon, and that speedily, was the only resource left him ; and it is

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not easy for the modern sportsman, accustomed to a gun that even a child can load in a second, to appreciate the exquisite torture of a man condemned to charge a muzzle-loader while a dear friend's life hangs in the balance. He did not stop to load both barrels ; it was neck or nothing now. But as he took aim, the fear of shooting his friend *could* obtrude itself, and while his finger quivered on the trigger, the gun went off almost automatically.

At the report Thackwray gave a gasp of joy ; but the instant pressure of the lioness's paw on his shoulder-blade told him that she was neither killed nor wounded.

Steedman, his hair on end and his brain in a whirl, stared stupidly at his empty gun. Then, all at once, there flashed through his mind the story, new then, and still a household word in South Africa to-day, of the canny Boer who "scared" a lion away from him. This worthy had wounded the beast, had taken flight, and, finding himself outrun, had climbed on to a stone heap, whence he had driven off the enemy with shouts and gestures.

Why not try this forlorn hope ? Despairingly the young hunter brandished his gun, shouting his lustiest, hissing, hooting, howling, till the lioness, wondering what manner of maniac this might be, turned her eyes full on him. Slowly retreating backwards, Steedman continued to yell : "Shoo ! Get away, you old hussy !" till at length the widow, if such she were, moved slowly away from her captive, and came sniffing towards his noisy companion.

Interspersing directions to his chum with his hoots and cries, Steedman stepped back and back, the lioness keeping pace with him. And now the suspense was redoubled, for Thackwray did not move ; and on his strong

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nerve and sure aim depended Steedman's life, and probably his own. Suppose he had fainted, or——

“Shoo—shoo—*shoot*, Thackwray !” shrieked the bewildered fugitive. Then, in a low voice, scarcely more than a whisper, the other replied :

“Can't you see I'm reaching for my gun ?”

So it was. Thackwray's right hand had been straying in the direction of his weapon as he lay, still unconscious of the enemy's precise whereabouts.

At last his tall figure seemed to Steedman's agitated imagination to shoot bolt upright and spin round in the air.

“Take that, and be hanged to you !” he heard ; then a double report, and the lioness dropped, not dead, indeed, but in such a condition as only called for the *coup de grâce*.



## CHAPTER IX

### ADVENTURES AMONG THE GREAT MONKEYS OF THE SOUTH AND SOUTH-EAST

Baboons and anthropoid apes.—What we know of the gorilla.—Mr. Methuen's adventure.—A troop of baboons.—A runaway.—The mother stopped by a leopard.—Capturing the little one.—The troop in full cry after the leopard.—Strange native baboon-trap.—The chimpanzee.—The orang-utan.—Mr. Earl and M. Benant in Sumatra.—Chasing an orang-utan family.—Hindrances.—Stealing a baby orang.—Pursued by the mother and father.—A horrible death in view.—Saved.—Conflict between the orang and a crocodile.

UNDER the above heading may be included the dog-headed monkeys or baboons, and those creatures which, from their likeness to man, have been called anthropoid apes—that is to say, the orang-utan and the chimpanzee, with his amiable relative the gorilla.

Of the last-named there is little that can be said here. The "gorilla" of fiction and the average travel-book is generally no gorilla at all, but either a chimpanzee, a negro, or a nightmare. William Winwood Reade, who went to the Gaboon country on purpose to study this animal, admits that he never beheld one at close quarters, and even goes the length of doubting whether M. du Chaillu ever did so. Be that as it may, there is no large mammal

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about which so little is known. The traveller writes of him from hearsay among the negroes ; the scientist from induction ; while the ordinary person only knows him from pictures, which can hardly be thought to flatter the poor beast. No adult gorilla has ever been taken alive (at any rate, since the days of Hanno the Carthaginian), and the little ones that have been caught have either died or else lived to be identified as chimpanzees.

Of the chimpanzee and the baboon it is possible to speak more definitely, both of these animals having frequently been seen, captured, fought with, or tamed. Both are to be found in the more southerly half of Africa, the baboon preferring the east side and the chimpanzee the west. A good account of the baboon is given by Mr. Henry Methuen, who spent eight months in big-game-hunting in the southern forests of Africa. He found them—as everybody else has done—brutal and ferocious, and altogether very undesirable as neighbours.

Returning one day from an unsuccessful buffalo hunt, he and an English friend, with two negro guides, encountered a troop of these animals on the march from an old habitation to a new one ; for it is the practice of most monkeys to take up their abode in a certain spot, to clear off all the eatables within a certain radius, and then to move on and establish a new town elsewhere. At sight of such a number—there were over fifty—the negroes fled and hid behind trees, leaving the sportsmen to manage as best they could.

Now, the baboons understand concerted attack better than all the other monkeys put together—perhaps better than any of the lower animals, though Methuen and his friend were not aware of this. Whether it be for fighting

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r for stealing, they will band together under the generalship of one or two elderly leaders, and their tactics would often put in the shade the methods of warfare followed by negroes.

These animals did not look particularly fierce at first sight, and the two Englishmen saw no reason why they should run away ; but, as the little army came nearer, both began rather to regret their temerity, for on such occasions the gruesome stories one has heard of the deeds of such and such an animal *will* obtrude themselves. When the beasts were within a hundred yards the coolness of both men failed them, and they sprang back from the long, straight path and hid behind a tree-trunk, from which they could still obtain a very excellent view of the march past.

Chattering, frisking, or squabbling, the little crowd passed on, the young ones pausing now and again to examine, with the inquisitiveness of pups, some object or other that lay by the way, and often staying so long that the mothers turned and cried to them to "come on." In one case an irate female actually turned and treated her youngster to a sound cuffing, and bundled him on in front of her in the most human manner.

"I must have one of those young ones," whispered Methuen's friend:

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when a particularly fine baby baboon caught sight of something that attracted his attention among the trees some yards to the far side of the path, and he scampered away from the line in pursuit.

"Wait," whispered Methuen. "If only the mother comes back, I'll shoot her, and you can go for the kid."

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It was not till the procession had moved on nearly another fifty yards that the mother missed her little one but when she did, her distress was so manifest that only a man who had more of the brute than the sportsman in him could have fired at her, and the two friends exchanged a glance of despair. Uttering plaintive little cries, the "babooness" trotted back, sniffing the ground as though trying to find the trail of the lost one, and having arrived opposite the tree which protected the two hunters, she stopped, and seemed to be staring straight at it.

"If she's coming here to attract her friends to us, she'll have to pay for it," said Methuen, drawing a long knife while his companion clubbed his gun. But she turned away again, and was starting across the path in the direction which the little one had taken, when the far end of an immense limb of the tree under which the two men were standing rustled and vibrated, and a long dark body shot from it like a thunderbolt. The hunters had been blissfully sheltering behind a tree on which a hungry leopard was perching.

Taking the mother thus unawares, the powerful brute seized her by the back of the neck, and started to run swiftly up the path in the reverse direction to that which the baboons had taken. Then came the most heart-rending shrieks from the victim, at the sound of which the distant body of monkeys turned like one man, and taking immense strides, were soon past the concealed pair, on the track of their tribe's enemy.

"Now's our only chance," said Methuen, springing from the hiding-place. But as he spoke, the two negro guides came out from among the trees on the other side

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f the path, one of them holding up with great pride the little baboon which his master was just hoping to catch. The black made a sign that they must escape as quickly as possible, and all four men set off at full speed, nor did they stop till they reached the native village for which they had been making.

What happened to the mother and the leopard it was impossible to say. Ordinarily the leopard, as we shall see in a subsequent chapter, is not far out in his calculations, and he may have got back to his lair in comfort, or, courageous as the baboons are, they will never pursue a leopard actually to his den. But if the monkeys caught him, he no doubt met with short shrift, for even one male baboon is often more than a match for a leopard. Curiously enough, the paws are the part of his enemy's anatomy that the baboon usually attacks, often biting them right through; and so agile are his movements that the other beast seems almost powerless against him. In a hand-to-hand scuffle with a monkey of this sort a man would be almost helpless; indeed, one of them has been known to kill a man with a single bite. His pet form of attack on such an occasion is to fasten his teeth firmly in the throat, and, keeping them there, to push the man away from him with his powerful arms. The result is the same as if a boy fixes his teeth in a large apple and then tries forcibly to pull the apple away.

The little baboon so easily captured soon grew very tractable and affectionate, and when the travellers returned to England they brought him with them.

At this native village Methuen saw a baboon-trap, which, for simplicity, beat all the snares he had ever heard of. He was not fortunate enough to see it in action,



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but the negroes solemnly assured him that it never failed to catch the monkey that ventured near it. A large pumpkin was hollowed out, filled with Indian corn, and tied securely to a stake fastened in the ground. The only opening left was a small sort of bung-hole in the top through which the inquisitive baboon might smell and inspect the contents. Being very fond of Indian corn, he would naturally insert his paw and grab as big a handful as possible ; but, like the fabled boy with the nuts, he would then find that he could not withdraw his hand, and, his intelligence not keeping pace with his greed, he was thus made a hopeless prisoner.

The negro who explained the methods and virtues of this trap may have been kin to the gentleman who carried guinea-pigs by the tail and caught birds with salt ; on the other hand, the reasoning power of monkeys comes to such sudden and unexpected stops that there is quite a reasonable ground for believing that such a trap might be effective.

The one or two chimpanzees which Mr. Methuen met with were far more intelligent than the baboons. The animals, varying in height from three and a half to five feet, are the apes which in appearance most nearly approach the human form. As to their native ferocity, there are diverse opinions. Methuen found them viciously mischievous rather than aggressive ; though, if wounded, they would turn more fiercely than any lion. A small one which he purchased became quite affectionate, though it would show at times a sort of hypocritical cunning. Unfortunately, the animal died on the voyage home ; but had he reached England, he probably would not have lived long for it is found that the chimpanzee can rarely stand on

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imate. Almost always the poor beast dies in rapid consumption if brought here, though he will live to a good old age in Southern Europe.

The orang-utan—which name is Malay for “wild man of the woods”—is a particularly unhandsome beast, as tall as a short man, covered with reddish hair, and painfully like a human idiot in the face. There is a dark variety in South-West Africa, but the real home of the animal is in and about Sumatra; and it was here that Mr. George Windsor Earl and a French naturalist, M. Benant, saw and studied him for a short time.

On hearing that a family of these apes had been seen outside the village where they were staying, the two travellers went in chase, guided by half a dozen natives. Following their tracks over a pestilential marsh, they reached a low jungle, into which all plunged.

“There they are!” cried M. Benant, before they had penetrated twenty yards into the jungle. A dozen good-sized monkeys could be seen fleeing through the canes towards a grove of trees beyond. But Mr. Earl, whose sight was better than his friend’s, at once saw that these were not orangs, but a reddish species of baboon. Anxious to obtain museum specimens, both men fired, and brought down two monkeys; but instantly the others seized their dead or wounded brethren and had soon fled with them out of reach of the guns.

Unchecked by this disappointment, the hunters pursued their way towards the forest; but, on reaching the far side of the jungle, found themselves still separated from it by a wide and muddy pool. They were about to walk round the end of this when one of the natives discovered

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a large canoe, with its paddles hidden in the bushes, and in this they made for the other side. But—fresh disappointment—when they reached the far bank there was only uninviting mud for them to land on, and, to make matters more unpleasant, the mud was then in the possession of a family of crocodiles, interesting enough at a distance, but not desirable as intimates.

After a good deal of paddling up and down, however, a firm landing-place was found, and all the hunters hastened into the forest. Here their perseverance was soon rewarded, for they suddenly came upon three orang-utans—*Monsieur, Madame, et Bébé*—Monsieur fast asleep with his back against a rock; Madame reflectively chewing berries; and their offspring persecuting a beetle at some distance from his parents.

“Farther back—quick!” whispered one of the natives. “You are too near to fire. If you were to miss, at least one of us would be killed.”

Then, while the rest prudently retreated, the natives stole swiftly forward, whipped up the little orang-utan, carrying it under his arm, followed his party. But, with a wild shriek that awakened her slumbering lord, the mother darted after the culprits, her mate following more slowly.

“Make for the boat; you can shoot from there,” screamed the native who had stolen the little one.

Stumbling and breathless, the travellers sought in vain to keep pace with their fleet-footed guides, while behind them, coming every moment nearer, sounded the crunch of the mother’s hurried steps over the fallen leaves. A few feet just ahead the sleepy crocodiles were bestirring themselves as though they thought dinner-time had about come round.

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Earl saw the grisly monsters waddling towards the canoe, and hesitated ; but one look round at his pursuer made even the crocodiles seem preferable : for the orang's red hair was bristling with rage, and, as she rushed on with flaming eyes, she looked as much like a she-devil as could well be imagined ; and not far behind her came the even more terrible male.

The natives had already scrambled into the boat, and were holding out hands to drag the Europeans after them, shouting and yelling so that all the crocodiles—except one particularly wicked and hungry-looking monster—took fright, and even he edged nervously back. Now the enraged mother was so near that the two fugitives could hear her panting breath—nay, almost feel it—behind them. One slip or stumble and they were lost. With a desperate effort M. Benant took a flying leap and landed safely in the boat, though he nearly knocked a native into the water in doing so ; and then something—it might have been orang-utan's paws, or crocodiles' jaws, or human hands : he scarcely knew which—seized the Englishman by the forearms and dragged him amidships, and the boat put off with a triumphant cry from the natives.

At sight of this the mother stopped, and, throwing her hands into the air, wept and raved so that the travellers could have found it in their hearts to carry her baby back to her. But the father wasted no time in lamentations, now that he was driven to extremities ; he plunged obstinately down the sloping bank, as though he would have given chase.

All of a sudden the old crocodile, which had been watching the proceedings drowsily, became very much awake

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and opened his jaws, with the benevolent intention putting it out of the orang's power to follow the kidnappers.

"The crocodile has got the old man," cried Earl, still too much shaken to dream of firing.

"No ; the old man will have the crocodile, you'll see," said the more experienced Frenchman. As he spoke the orang sprang to one side, avoiding the horrible jaw and the next minute was seated on the reptile's back avenging on him the sins of the hunters. Blow after blow rained on the crocodile's head ; and then, as the tormented creature started in desperation to run down to the water, the gallant ape leant forward, grasped the upper jaw in his left hand and the lower in his right, and proceeded to give as sickening an exhibition of his strength as even the most unhealthy-minded person might wish to see ; for he tore the jaws asunder as a man might split a cleft stick, and in another moment the reptile had ceased to struggle.

The little orang died before long, but neither of the travellers felt inclined to go in search of another to supply his place.



## CHAPTER X

### HUNTING THICK-SKINNED WILD BEASTS

the elephant, the rhinoceros, and the hippopotamus.—“The elephant’s a gentleman.”—Pursued by a she-elephant.—Up a tree.—Nearly shot.—Choosing the less of two evils.—Killing the calf.—A hundred bullets to one elephant.—A Kafir hunt.—Standing on dangerous ground.—The first elephant killed by the chief.—“Do not kill us, great captain.”—A blind elephant.—Drawbacks to the pursuit of science.—The rhinoceros of Africa.—An unreasonable beast.—A terrible weapon of defence.—James Bruce’s description of an Abyssinian hunt.—Ham-stringing the game.—The hippopotamus.—Dr. Baikie’s expedition.—Traps and poisoned arrows.—Taking the latitude under difficulties.—A horrible predicament.

THE elephant and the rhinoceros as found in Africa, together with the hippopotamus, form the subject of this chapter. For a glance at the skin, legs, and movements of these huge creatures at once convinces us that they must be closely related to each other, even though their heads are so dissimilar in shape, even though one rhinoceros is black and another white, though one has two horns and another only one, and the hippopotamus none at all.

The only one of the three that can boast a trunk is the elephant, and of him we shall first speak. This African monster differs from his Asiatic or Eastern brother in having a rounder, more convex forehead, larger ears,

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and a darker coat, as well as in having but three toes instead of four, on the hind-feet. In a tame state we know how far he is capable of being an ally to his owners and even when wild it would be absurd to class him with the lion and the ape and the leopard as an enemy to man. "The elephant's a gentleman," sings Mr. Kipling alluding to the domesticated animal; and the compliment should by right be extended to the undomesticated for there is a well-bred dignity about him—a suggestion of majesty, dominion and power—that should make even the most inveterate hunter feel that he is in the presence of the aristocrat of the forest.

Not that the African savage or the European colonist would unreservedly subscribe to the idea of his being an enemy to the crops. When so inclined, he will eat up a young plantation or trample down a corn-field, with no more consideration than the veriest cad among gorillas would show. Still, a gentleman may lose his temper sometimes, may even display a certain degree of mischievousness or vindictiveness, and yet keep his character.

In a general way it is only to the disturber of his peace that he is an enemy, and to him he can be terrible. Therefore, if the reader aspires to go a-hunting for elephants he must be prepared for some hard knocks, and worse. Further, let him take some other gear than that used for rabbit or pigeon shooting, or he may risk the same unpleasant predicament in which the White Nile explorer, Dr. Werne, once found himself while shooting small game in Abyssinia.

Herr Werne and his Arab servant were peacefully lunching on the edge of a forest, having killed as many

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birds as they could carry back to their hut, when they were interrupted by an enormous uproar in a distant part of the forest. Shouts and screams, either of triumph or fear, re-echoed among the trees, till it seemed to the strangers that a native battle must be in progress ; and not wishing to take an active part in Abyssinian political troubles, the German made a sign to his man to collect all their belongings and make for the open again. But before this could be done, the Arab, with a cry of alarm, pointed to a dusky mass coming towards them, and Dr. Werne beheld, to his dismay, a female elephant with her well-grown calf running so close to him that, if they kept a straight line, they would pass him at a distance of about twelve yards.

But they were not destined to pass him ; some strange caprice made the mother suddenly turn the " tail of her eye " on the innocent travellers, and in a moment she wheeled, as though confusing them with other foes, and made straight for them. Dr. Werne was not usually a nervous man ; he had killed his elephant times out of number ; but between the suddenness of the attack, the dreadful consciousness that his only weapon was a rook-rifle and his servant's a patriarchal matchlock, and the deafening shouts of the natives, who appeared to be coming in chase, all power to act fled away from him. But as he stood gaping at the destruction that threatened him, he was seized by the arms and dragged bodily on to the low bough of a tree to which his servant had already swung himself.

" Up to the next," cried the Arab, as he hoisted himself on to a higher branch, while the thunder of the elephant's fore-feet sounded a bare yard or two from the

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tree-trunk. Werne did not wait for a second hint, but with the strength of madness, drew himself on to the next bough, seven feet above the first.

Now, the first was but five feet from the ground, so that the fugitives were now landed on a sort of platform twelve feet high. But the elephant's height was as near as possible eleven feet, and Werne had an uncomfortable feeling that she could, with the greatest ease, lift her head and so make it twelve, leaving him and his companion with the unenviable prospect of being knocked off their perch or dragged down by her enormous trunk, and trampled to a mass by her feet. He looked up; the next bough was quite out of reach, and long before either could get to the main stem to climb higher, the elephant would probably have worked her will on at least one of them.

Meanwhile the shouting came nearer, and now the prisoners could see the dark forms of men dodging among the trees. They looked helplessly at each other; the elephant had stopped, and was glaring savagely up at them, as though meditating on her mode of attack. Then came the crash of a gun, and a bullet whistled just over the Arab's head; had he been standing upright instead of crouching, it must have passed through his body.

Yet the shot probably saved the life of one of them; for the old elephant at once started back as though stung, turned her head, saw upwards of a hundred negroes and Abyssinians spreading round her, and promptly began to make a dash for safety. But before she had taken three strides she pulled up short again, and, laying her trunk over her little one, drew it nearer to her.

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astonished at this new development, Werne looked ahead of her, and there saw a dozen hunters, all armed with guns, taking aim at her ; the natives, well used to their work, had already spread into a semicircle, and now were joining up to form a complete ring round their prey. Wherever he looked one or more gunmen were standing, and the circle was gradually closing in.

He only now had leisure to think on the refuge which had been thrust upon him ; it was brought back to his mind by the Arab, who, with a cry of pain or fear, had just buried his face and neck in his arms. Werne shuddered as he turned to see what had happened, for he remembered that pythons and leopards and baboons—of all of which the neighbourhood was alarmingly productive—often select to pass some of their spare time in a tree ; and why not in this as well as another ? A glance at his man relieved his worst fears, for the present enemy was nothing more terrible than a few dozen wild bees, which had decided that the Arab was there for some purpose hostile to themselves.

Werne burst out laughing at his own fears ; nevertheless, the horrors that his position suggested could not so easily be laughed away ; and when to the notions of a leopard's claw, a python's embrace, or a baboon's bite, was added the still more tangible danger from badly aimed bullets (one of which, even as he turned, flattened itself against the bough under his feet), the doctor concluded that he would be as safe on the ground as elsewhere. The Arab did not wait to learn his master's decision, but took a flying leap down, snatched up his precious matchlock, and fired off the charge at the little elephant, whose grunts and gasps of pain at once proved



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it to be wounded. The mother rounded on him as if she moved on springs, but a dozen bullets on her right flank made her stop and turn to see whence they had come, and Werne took advantage of her being thus engaged to drop from his uncomfortable perch, and hurriedly to seek shelter among the nearest group of hunters.

The elephant-gun, as we understand it nowadays, was not then in existence, and the weapons of the natives were old-fashioned even for that time; so that Werne was forced to the conclusion that one-half of the hunters would have shot the other half long before the elephant could be brought down. In this he did the Africans some injustice; their aim was, on the whole, good, and they observed a certain amount of method in their attack, every man sheltering himself as far as possible behind either a tree or a boulder, or in some safe hollow.

The firing continued; the little one dropped, and the mother made futile charges back and forth, rocking herself with pain and fury whenever a ball struck her. At last all was over; she fell gasping and groaning and kicking, and, after one final struggle, lay motionless. When Werne came to examine the carcass, he found not less than a hundred bullet-wounds in it.

In South Africa the Kafirs have only within recent years taken to attacking the elephant with guns; the assegai is the weapon with which they are most expert, and to this day many of them prefer to use only that. A hunt carried on by means of such primitive tools must needs be risky and exciting; but, inasmuch as the Kafirs are more courageous than the African tribes further north, such hunts are enormously productive.

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Mr. Andrew Steedman, of whose lion-slaying exploits mention has been made, took part in one of these.

Early on the morning of the hunt signalmen were placed on every one of the chain of hillocks that surrounded a thickly wooded ravine, supposed to be in the occupation of a large herd of elephants. The business of these men was twofold : to give the alarm as soon as they sighted the herd, and to play the part of beaters, arousing and frightening the game by their vociferous outcries.

Steedman had finished his breakfast, and was making a final examination of his gun, when shouts were heard from the nearest hill-top, and two messengers from the chief came to tell him that the sport was about to begin. The Englishman hurriedly joined the main body of hunters, and proceeded with them towards the mouth of the ravine. Knowing as he did the excitability of the Kafir character, he was surprised to find all the men approaching their task so coolly and phlegmatically. This need not have astonished him ; the Kafir hunts the elephant for profit rather than for sport, for half of the chief's revenue is derived from traffic in ivory. And it may be noticed that, when gain is the sole end in view, a man approaches such work with a very great deal of calculation and a very little thrill of excitement ; it is almost the difference between the feelings of the sportsman who brings down a bird on the wing and of the hen-wife who wrings a chicken's neck.

But, arrived at the entry of the ravine, Steedman found that the beaters and the dogs were making up for his companions' want of enthusiasm ; the shouting was deafening, and, as the dogs were loosed and sent in to

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drive the game forward, it seemed as though pandemonium had broken loose. Suddenly the howling and barking were augmented by an angry and more blatant sound—the trumpeting of disturbed elephants; and to this succeeded the steady tramp and thud of a large number of heavy feet approaching. Steedman had innocently taken up what he conceived to be a good position, and was intently watching the spot whence the elephant procession might be expected to issue, when he felt himself seized by the collar and swiftly dragged up the slope behind him. Turning, half throttled, he beheld one of the signalmen who had hurried down from his watch-tower, and who explained with a polite grin that the Englishman had chosen the very place where he was certain to be trampled over.

“We do not attack them to their face,” he remarked; “we wait till they have turned their backs on us.”

In a very few minutes Steedman proved the truth of the nigger’s words; the thunder of footfalls increased, the ravine re-echoed with the crash of falling timber, as branches and saplings were snapped or trampled, and then, like a great black riotous wave, the elephants burst into the plain, followed—and now outrun—by the fierce Kafir dogs. Had Steedman remained where he was, nothing could have saved him.

Having gained the open, the elephants reduced their speed; some continued at a sort of jog-trot, some stopped and rocked themselves, as though seeking an object on which to vent their fury, while others turned snappishly on the dogs and lashed out at them with their trunks. Then arose a chorus of shouts from the hunters, and the whole body swooped down from the slopes on to the rear

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the herd. For a moment the animals seemed bewildered by this addition to the prevailing discord ; the leaders stopped, and the rest now followed suit ; the hollow trumpeting increased, but not a single animal made any attempt to attack the crowd of hunters that hemmed them in on every quarter but the one which lay before them. This was natural enough. The wild elephant's first instinct at the approach of man is undoubtedly one of fear ; indeed, the African bull-elephant, except at certain seasons, might almost be called harmless. Though exceedingly intelligent, his brain works slowly, and it takes him some time to "think a thing out"; but bad luck to his persecutors when he at last realizes that it is time for him to remonstrate with them.

While the herd were thus hovering between surprise, fear, and inclination to vengeance, the Kafir chief, at whose side Steedman was now standing, walked forward with the utmost nonchalance and drove his long-bladed knife into an old elephant's abdomen ; then skipped deftly back as the poor creature sank quivering on to his knees. The chief's feat was hailed with triumphant acclamation, and, as though they regarded this as a starting signal, the Kafirs commenced their task of butchery. Half a dozen men to one beast, they drove their keen-bladed assegais through the thick, leathery skin, doing more injury to the animal in a few seconds than Steedman seemed able to do with his rifle in as many minutes.

But the maniacal yelling had stopped now ; every man was cool again, though by no means silent. Instead of the insane shouts that had first been uttered,



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each Kafir began to substitute a prayer to the animal he was endeavouring to kill, gabbling it in a quick sing-song voice ; the burden of this was :

“ Do not kill us, great captain ; do not strike us or tread upon us, O mighty chief ! ”—a fairly cool request on the whole, considering what they were doing to the elephants.

A certain amount of rivalry existed among the slaughterers ; whoever got in first blow claimed the beast, no matter by whose hand it subsequently fell. Steedman shot one of them dead that had been slightly wounded by a black whom the elephant was just in the act of seizing with his trunk ; and the black's method of showing his gratitude to his preserver was the brisk reminder, “ He's mine, remember—not yours.”

One beast refused to succumb to just a few spears ; twenty natives surrounded his flanks and hinder end, and it was not till full sixty assegais bristled in him like the pricks of a hedgehog that he dropped. Steedman was taken up with noticing this, and it was not till a warning shout came from a negro near at hand that he perceived that one bull had broken away from the herd, and was making a determined charge towards him. He fired both his barrels ; one bullet struck the animal's forehead, the other glanced off his shoulder ; and, seeing that this had no effect, the Englishman fled towards the range of rocks at the foot of one of the hills, accompanied by his negro neighbour, whose stock of assegais had become reduced to one. If he could reach the rocks, Steedman would probably be able to load in safety. Half-way there, the Kafir looked back ; then, instead of keeping straight forward, started on a zigzag course.



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“Run like this,” he shouted.

Steedman obeyed wonderingly, and at length ventured look round. The elephant was still coming along in a rect line, but with his trunk stiff and his head slightly bowed, as though he were following by scent rather than by sight. The Kafir looked back once more, then stopped.

“We are quite safe,” he cried. “I was right ; the great captain is stone-blind.”

Blindness, partial or complete, is terribly rife among the African elephants ; and such as are afflicted with it guide themselves entirely by sense of touch and smell.

Leaving the Kafir to engage their pursuer’s attention, the Englishman ran on a little farther, then stopped, loaded both barrels again, and returned to the charge. Afflicted though he was, the elephant would not let the Kafir get near enough to stab him ; and, as this was his last weapon, the fellow durst not risk throwing it. Dodging round and round, the keen-scented animal kept his enemy at bay, and might have got off scot-free eventually but for a bullet from Steedman’s gun, which pierced him through the eye.

The two hurried back to the hunt, to find that a few elephants had turned and safely regained the ravine, while the rest were dead or dying ; and the natives were now about to secure what they had come hunting for—the tusks. But first two little ceremonies had to be gone through with becoming decency and reverence. The tuft at the end of each animal’s tail was cut off and presented with great solemnity to the chief ; these tufts would, in due course, be fixed on poles and placed at the entrance of that gentleman’s cattle-pen. Next, the

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spirits of the departed elephants had to be conciliated and this was done by cutting off the tip of each ear and trunk, and ceremoniously burying them. Finally the tusks were extracted, and the carcasses were left to the dogs and vultures.

When two Kafirs had performed all these operations on the blind elephant, which Steedman could lawfully claim as his, he decided to dissect the beast for scientific purposes; but when this intention was made clear to the blacks, their very wool bristled with horror at such an indignity to the deceased; and no amount of persuasion, bribes, or threats would prevail on any of the tribe to help him in such a task, which, accordingly, was not carried out.

The rhinoceros is both unlovely and unreasonable. We have seen that even the lion and the leopard, if left alone, are in the main harmless to man; but this surly beast is liable to sudden fits of irritation, during which it is better to give him a wide berth. An insect stings him (for, thick as his hide is, it has its tender parts), or a fly gets in his eye, or a blade of grass up his nostril; the result is that, hopelessly ignorant of the law of cause and effect, he vents his ill-humour on whatever may be in his way, charging at a gate-post or a tree or a man, or even a brother pachyderm, with delightful impartiality. The Rev. J. G. Wood cites an instance of one of them attacking, while in this mood, a number of picketed horses, and ruthlessly slaying several with his horn. Bearing this temper of his in mind, we are bound to sympathize with the hunter who makes it his business to destroy such a public nuisance.

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As to this horn which forms the animal's chief weapon of defence and offence, it should be pointed out that it has no connexion with the bony framework of the head ; it is rather a sort of corn or wart, and could easily be removed with a sharp carving-knife. But having thus been operated on, the rhinoceros would not be entirely defenceless, for his great strength, weight, and speed would still render him almost as dangerous an adversary as the elephant himself.

There are several varieties of the African rhinoceros ; but it will be sufficient to say that there are two black kinds—one large and one small—and that, till recently, there were also two “ white ” or smoke-coloured kinds. The larger white rhinoceros is still occasionally met with in South Africa, and ranks next to the elephant among land mammals in point of size. This species has two horns ; the hind one a few inches long, the other anything up to four feet. The late Roualeyn Gordon Cumming whose rhinoceros-hunting adventures the present writer has related elsewhere\*) killed one of these animals whose pre-horn measured five feet two inches.

The east side of Africa, from Abyssinia down to the Cape, is the special home of the rhinoceros, though persistent hunting is gradually centralizing him midway between the two, and in a few years he will probably be quite extinct. In the time of the great explorer James Bruce, Abyssinia was overrun with them, particularly the two black species ; and he describes the native method of hunting them. Two men, one armed with a long spear, the other with a sword, lay in wait for the animal on the edge of a wood, both seated on one horse, while dogs

\* See “ Adventures in the Great Deserts.”

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were sent in to worry him from his retirement among trees into the open. As soon as he appeared, the man with the lance, who sat foremost in the saddle, guided his horse towards the irritated brute and tried to pierce him in his most vulnerable part—the left flank. More often than not this attempt was fruitless, for, ungainly as he is, the beast moves at immense speed, and can turn with surprising ease. On catching sight of a fresh foe he would trample a way through the dogs that crowded round him, and make a mad rush for the horse.

But all this had been foreseen. The spearman, an expert rider, had only to draw his horse to one side, and the rhinoceros, unable to stop himself for the moment, shot straight past. But he was soon ready to turn again and to make once more for the horse. Here he had reckoned without the man with the sword. He, slipping down from behind his companion just as the horse was drawn to one side to avoid the charge, proceeded to run after the rhinoceros, and before the creature was aware of his presence, had with one swift stroke of his sword severed the large muscle of the ham just above the hock, and the hunt was finished, barring the “death”; for the rhinoceros fell either on his knees or on his side, and lay roaring, screaming, and powerless; and a score of men were soon at hand to stab him to death.

The hippopotamus, a giant twelve feet long, is exclusively an African beast, and, like the rhinoceros, but rarely found nowadays; even as far back as 1833 there were but two left in the Cape Colony, and these were preserved as curiosities. He is still seen occasionally in the northern parts of South Africa, the Congo State





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In Abyssinia two hunters, one armed with a spear, the other with a sword, are mounted on the same horse. The one with the spear goads the animal to charge, and as the huge brute thunders past, the man with the sword slips down and severs its hamstring.





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and the country of the Niger Basin. In the 'fifties he was common enough in the latter district, and often caused a good deal of trouble to the H.M.S. *Pleiad* exploring expedition under Dr. Baikie, R.N.

Dr. Baikie, it may be remembered, succeeded to the command of the *Pleiad* man-of-war schooner on the death of the Captain, and took her up the Niger and Benue, proceeding two hundred and fifty miles farther inland than any of his predecessors had done. He found the hippopotamus in very bad odour among the natives, despite the peaceable character which most travellers have given to the animal. This might spring from the natural horror that the blacks have of the great river monster, based on the ghastly tales of his dealings with man that have been handed down from father to son ; or it might arise from the very real grievance which they had against him on account of his attacks on their sugar-canes ; or, again, it might be (and probably was) that the negro's inordinate love of hippopotamus-meat, and his desire to barter the skin and tusks, make him seize upon any excuse for killing him by fair means or foul.

Baikie met with two native methods of destroying the creature—neither of them particularly sportsmanlike—traps and poisoned arrows. On the banks of the Benue he soon learned to know the track of the hippopotamus, and to avoid it, not from fear of the animal so much as of the horribly dangerous trap which was fairly certain to be somewhere in the neighbourhood. This consisted of a few poles planted firmly in the ground in a rough circle, slanting upwards till the tops almost met. Lightly held by these tops was a heavy perpendicular beam, shod with a sharp iron point. In theory, this mighty engine

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descended on the head or neck of the river-horse as I poked about among the canes, seeking the juicy shoot which his soul loves ; in practice, it was far more likely to tumble on the first unwary foot-passenger who happened to pass under it.

From the schooner the doctor beheld a native hunt which was interesting enough in its way. The blacks in their canoes, awaited the puffing, snorting sound which announced that a hippopotamus was swimming somewhere near, and then steered for the most likely spot at which to get a sure aim at him with least danger to themselves. This was but common prudence, for a hippopotamus makes no more trouble of biting the side out of a boat, and thus offering the crocodiles a gratuitous meal than a monkey does of cracking a nut.

As soon as the hapless beast came into open water he found himself surrounded by canoes, and before he could decide which way to turn, twenty poisoned arrows were sticking all over him. True, this was a wasteful way of killing him, for a dead hippopotamus almost always sinks for at least six hours, and during that time the poison from the arrows has had a chance to distribute itself and spoil the meat ; but when the animal was thus killed while on the bank or in the mud, he was at once skinned and quartered, the arrows were removed, and the meat was apparently fit for human food. Those who have tried it say that the flesh of a fat young beast is as tender as veal, and far more tasty.

While on the Upper Benue, Dr. Baikie came to closer quarters with some of these monsters than was pleasant. One evening, while the schooner lay at anchor, he wanted to land to make some astronomical observations. A

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small islet, four feet above the water, lay to windward of the *Pleiad*, and seemed a convenient place for the doctor's purpose; accordingly, he and a couple of officers got into the cutter and made their Krumen pull them ashore. On landing, they had some difficulty in finding a clear spot on which to stand the sextant and other mathematical instruments, and, while the Krumen were trampling down the long grass and bushes to make such a place, Baikie examined their bearings by the light of a bull's-eye lantern. Just as the officers called to him that all was ready, a hoarse bellow that shook the island came from among the reeds, and his light fell on the form of a hippopotamus coming towards him.

Baikie at once shut off the light and hurried back to his companions. Unfortunately, the Krumen were unarmed, and the officers had but their swords and revolvers. And this was not the worst; thick clouds were forming, and if the explorers retreated, the chances were that all hope of taking the latitude would be gone. And if they did not retreat——

The doctor hurriedly explained that the beast was coming towards them.

"Ah! then him frightened. Him charge!" said one of the Krumen who understood English. This was reassuring. A solitary male hippopotamus is dangerous at the best of times, and never more so than when startled; on such an occasion he will seize a human body in his enormous jaws and bite till his teeth meet.

"Show light," urged the Krumen. "Light frighten him back."

The doctor flashed the bull's-eye into the canes once more; certainly it had the effect of stopping the beast,

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but he opened his cavernous mouth and roared in a manner that would make any unarmed man quail. Baikie looked at his watch ; in ten minutes the planet Jupiter, for whose appearance they were waiting, was due.

"We must risk it," he whispered. "One of you fellows take the lantern while I see after the instruments."

The doctor was dividing his attentions between his watch, the sextant, and the clouds, when the lantern flashed round like a searchlight, and the officer who held it ejaculated, "Good Lord ! here's another of 'em " ; and as he spoke, a second roaring on the other side of them began. This was too much for the Krumen ; without waiting for permission, they sprang into the cutter, and but for the gleam of a revolver barrel which was promptly pointed at them by the unoccupied officer, they would have rowed off.

Baikie looked at his watch again ; seven minutes, at the very least, to wait ! The lantern was dodging from right to left ; the hippopotami were engaged in a concert of roars, and every now and then the reeds rustled as though one of them had decided to bring matters to a head. Each of those minutes seemed as long as a month, and by way of cheering the Englishmen up, the Krumen sat quaking and whining, seemingly on the watch for the first opportunity to escape.

Suddenly there was a tremendous splash in the water to the right.

"One of 'em gone, thank goodness !" exclaimed the doctor.

"No such luck," whispered the lieutenant who held the lantern. "That was a leopard ; I've had my eye and the light on him for the last minute ; if I'd spoken, he



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ight have sprung, and the niggers would have left us it. Bravo! One gone at last." As he spoke, one of the intruders realized that he could escape by water, and did so. But the other roared more loudly than ever, and advanced a yard or two.

"If he comes a step farther I'll send a bullet down that throat of his," said the lieutenant with the revolver.

"Don't you be a young fool," muttered the doctor. Ha! Saved, by—Jupiter!"

At Baikie's involuntary shout at the appearance of the animal, the hippopotamus growled in a rumbling sort of way; then turned and disappeared in the water, leaving the courageous trio masters of the field.

## CHAPTER XI

### LEOPARD AND PANTHER HUNTING

Misleading terminology.—Leopard or panther ?—The animal's qualities.—Attitude towards man.—M. Bombonnel's terrible experience.—Waiting on a dark night for a leopard.—A hand-to-hand struggle.—Bombonnel's predicament when found.—The West African leopard or panther.—Mr. John Duncan's experiences of panther-trapping.—A leopard's "larder."—Traps.—Panther-baiting with dogs.—Hunting the Indian leopard.—Mr. G. T. Vigne.—Terror of the elephants.—A bold English huntress.—The leopard "treed."—*Noblesse oblige*.—The cheetah, or hunting-leopard.

A VERY common fault among both ancient and modern travellers is that of misnaming, or applying a purely local name or slang-term to, the animals, or birds, or plants, or geographical features that have come under their notice. Thus, when a hunter, describing his adventures in print, speaks of having killed a tiger or a leopard in South America, and a lion or a buffalo or a panther in the Western States, the reader, whose natural history book tells him that these animals are quite unknown in the localities mentioned, is not a little bewildered.

The leopard is never found elsewhere than in the middle and south-eastern portions of the Eastern Hemisphere—that is to say, Africa, parts of the Caucasus, and South and Central Asia.

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The panther, again, is an African beast, though not unknown in South-Eastern Asia, and must not be confused with what the American trapper calls the "painter," which may be either a jaguar or a puma. The panther is simply a somewhat larger form of leopard, occasionally of a darker shade; and, though it was at one time regarded as a separate species, all modern naturalists look upon panther and leopard as being even less distinct than, for instance, the grizzly and the American black bear.

In beauty of marking, elegance of form, and suppleness of movement, the leopard has few, if any, superiors in the animal world; in ferocity and relative strength he has few equals. An animal that can make a forty-foot leap with tolerable ease; that can carry off a pig, a couple of dogs, and half a score of poultry in one night; that has been known to slay a man with a single stroke of his paw, and that does not hesitate to attack even an elephant when brought to bay; above all, that can climb almost as well as any cat or monkey, is scarcely to be considered as an agreeable neighbour; and it is no wonder that the man who is destined to live within reach of so formidable a creature should bring his invention to bear on its speedy destruction. The very beauty of the beast's skin, too, is a constant temptation to the hunter and trapper, whether civilized or uncivilized; for as an ornament to an English hall or to the shoulders of an African chief, it is alike valuable.

The leopard has the same underlying dread of human-kind as is found in all the *Felidæ*; and there is scarcely a single authentic instance of a man's being unprovokedly attacked by him. Children he has been known to seize

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and to devour, but happily even those cases are rare. But when once he is wounded or balked, the lion is not a whit more terrible than he. Moreover, few animals have a greater hold on life. If it were not for indisputable testimony, it would be difficult to believe that a leopard, wounded by half a dozen bullets, to say nothing of innumerable spear-thrusts, could spring upon, bear down, and often slay one or more of his tormentors ; yet such is the case. The moral is obvious : unless you are certain of killing the beast at a single shot, keep out of his way. An adventure which befell M. Bombonnel, an eminent scientist and one of the most successful big-game hunters France ever produced, is an apt illustration of this fact.

While shooting in Algeria, M. Bombonnel was told one night that a leopard had just made a sudden descent on a neighbouring pen, and had carried off a full-grown goat. Caring nothing for the fact that the night was dark and chilly, and the moon not yet up, the intrepid hunter seized his gun and hurried after his informant to the Arab camp which the beast had visited. Delighted at finding some one bold enough to attack so terrible an enemy to the tribe, the Arabs made ready to conduct the Frenchman to the spot where the thief had been seen to disappear. Taking with them another goat as a lure in case of need, they led him across a plain overgrown with scrub, to the mouth of a ravine five hundred yards away from their camp.

Here Bombonnel took his stand on a bit of high ground, from which he could look down into the gloomy, uninviting depths of the ravine. The natives, not enamoured either of the task or the neighbourhood, made all speed to tether the goat at a distance of about twenty yards to

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the hunter's left, and then, wishing him well out of his undertaking, fled back to their camp.

Before the Frenchman had been waiting five minutes, there was a stealthy movement among the trees on his left front, though still he could see nothing. Then came a whirring sound, followed almost immediately by a despairing bleat, which was abruptly stifled while still only half uttered. The leopard had discovered and taken the bait.

Praying ardently that the moon, which was now almost due, would show him a ray of light, the hunter strained his eyes in vain for a sight of the game. For a minute or two the suspense was unendurable, for a leopard, even when his attention is otherwise engaged, is not the companion one would choose on a dark night. At length, however, a black, shapeless mass could be seen moving, not actually towards him, but as though making for a point about ten feet in front of where he stood.

For more than a month M. Bombonnel had been sacrificing his night's rest in vain, on the chance of getting a shot at one of these animals; and now that that chance had at last come, he needed all his coolness and presence of mind to keep him from rushing headlong into danger. Nearer and nearer came the dim outline, till, by holding his gun at arm's length, he could almost have touched it. No longer hesitating, he pulled one of the triggers. Agonized roars of pain came from the dark object, which paused and seemed to fall completely in halves; for the leopard instantly loosed his hold of the goat. Then the echo of the roaring died away, and there was dead silence. Fearing to attract attention to himself, the hunter stood breathless, his finger on the second trigger,



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watching for a sign of further life on the part of the leopard. Half a minute passed without a sound from the fallen beast; then another half-minute, at the end of which Bombonnel concluded that the shot had been fatal. Thereupon, creeping inch by inch from his hiding-place and still keeping his gun at the shoulder, he began to make for the spot where—his eyes being now more accustomed to the darkness—he could see the two animals lying motionless.

Then, without any warning growl or snarl, one of the two dark bodies rose in the air, and Bombonnel knew that an infuriated leopard was making for him. He fired blindly, missed, and in an instant the terrible creature had borne him to the ground and was snarling over him, tearing viciously with his teeth at the woollen hood and coat-collar that protected the hunter's neck.

Striving might and main to hold his assailant at arm's length with his left hand, the unhappy man fumbled with his right for the hunting-knife that now lay underneath him. But the leopard's fangs were clenched on the wrist that was holding him, and the awful sickle-shaped claws fixed themselves in his victim's shoulder, so that Bombonnel could only with difficulty refrain from shrieking with the pain of it all; and, abandoning the hope of disengaging his knife, he sought to wrestle with the enemy. This was useless, for, after a second of blood-curdling suspense, a breath of hot, fetid air spread over his forehead, and, before he dared think of what was happening, the brute had the whole of his face in its mouth, and was crushing his jaws and cheek-bones together.

Bombonnel knew that now was his last chance of resist-

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ance ; tame submission on his part would mean that he had scarce thirty seconds to live. Neglectful, in his excitement, of the torturing pains in his wrist and shoulders that at any other time would have been sufficient to render him delirious, he grasped the animal by its thick, rawny neck, and, with the strength of a maniac, wrenched away the teeth and jaws that were lacerating and crushing him to death.

Thus foiled for a moment, the animal jerked his head free and made a dog-like snap at Bombonnel's left arm, driving his teeth through the thick cloth that covered it, well into the elbow. But this was a mere trifle now that the prostrate man had got his head free again. Gripping the leopard's throat still tighter with his right hand, he threw all the muscular force that remained to him into one desperate outward jerk of his arm. The teeth were snatched out of his elbow, and the leopard, with a yell of spite, was hurled down the slope at the top of which the hunter lay.

Faint and giddy, and with his mouth full of blood and loosened teeth, Bombonnel staggered to his feet ; and now, irresponsible between pain and rage and the feeling that he had not many hours to live, he seized his hunting-knife, and went stumbling down the incline in search of the brute that had apparently cost him his life. Here, roaming about like a man that had taken leave of his senses, the Arabs found him ; for his involuntary cries and the savage roars of the leopard had made themselves heard even at the camp.

The body of the leopard, which had probably died from loss of blood, was eventually found just inside the ravine. Bombonnel for some time lay at a farm-house,

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hovering between life and death ; and though eventually he recovered, and lived to slay many more leopards he never again risked a hand-to-hand combat with one of them.

In the West of Africa, round about Dahomey and Ashantee, the leopard—or panther, as most British travellers there have named him—is the bane of every native stock-keeper's existence ; for he is a most intelligent beast, sly as a fox, and almost as difficult to trap. The celebrated explorer, John Duncan, British Vice-Consul at Whydah in 1849, has a good deal to tell us about the depredations of this creature, and also of the native West African methods of killing or snaring him.

The ravages committed in his neighbourhood by panthers among the sheep, cattle, and poultry, piqued his curiosity as to what became of so much live-stock ; and one day, at the close of a native hunt, he took the trouble to climb into the fork of a tree in which a leopardess—or “ pantheress ”—had been shot. And here he found what has often been described as a “ leopard's larder.” Here were stored, neatly and methodically, a bull's head, sundry fowls, half a dog, and the best part of a goat, all carefully covered with leaves and twigs.

For the native who had killed the animal no praise was too great, his fellow-tribesmen lauding him to the skies as their hero and deliverer ; for here, as in South Africa, a negro's true title to manhood is the fact of his having slain a leopard. Indeed, among the Kafirs, a man who can show half a dozen leopard's tails is almost a prince *de facto*.

As a rule Duncan found that the negroes were too much in fear of their enemy to attack him boldly, even with guns ;

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They much preferred setting traps for him. The principal drawback to some of these was that they could not be quite guaranteed not to catch some unsuspecting man or beast that happened to be wandering near them ; and more than once an inoffensive ox was thus not only caught, but permanently injured. The ordinary snare consisted of two upright poles, seven feet high and about the same distance apart, across the tops of which a heavy log or beam was loosely laid. From this beam protruded a row of sharp teeth made of hard wood, and underneath, hidden in the grass, was a wooden lever connected by cords with the ends of the beam ; so that any unwary animal that stepped on the lever was tolerably certain of finding about three hundredweight of wood precipitated on its back or head.

By the more rustic population this form of trap was looked upon with great contempt as the futile invention of mere Cockney sportsmen. In the outlying villages, Duncan found the people not only apt and successful at setting snares, but also given to a little sportive baiting of the animal thus captured with dogs. The favourite trap was a stout wooden cage, twenty feet long and only two broad, at the far end of which a live kid was tethered. Attracted by its bleating, the hapless leopard that was on the look-out for an easily procured meal came sniffing at that end of the trap at which the poor kid was crouching. Finding that he could not get at his victim through the stout bars, the hungry beast at last abandoned his usual caution, and going to the other end, dashed recklessly through the opening. But before he had proceeded a dozen yards, his foot had encountered a lever, and this, on being pressed, pulled a cord that at once



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released a heavy "drop-door," which slid easily down its groove, and effectually cut off the trespasser's retreat.

In the morning, attracted by the dismayed howls of the captive, the whole village would turn out, and having anathematized the prisoner, — reminding him, for instance, of the fine heifer he had stolen the other night or of the beautiful brood of chickens he had so ruthlessly slaughtered—would proceed to stir up the wretch to a pitch of frenzy with poles or spears. Finally a dog would be thrust through the entrance and urged to attack the beast, which, of course, could not turn in so small a compass, and which, but for its formidable hind claws, was at the dog's mercy—unless that animal's "vaulting ambition" should chance to "o'erleap itself," as would occasionally happen, when, tired of worrying the haunched of the captive, he would spring clean over his back, to find the tables exactly reversed. In such a case a second dog was quickly hustled through the trap-door, and while the infuriated panther mangled the first with his teeth, the new-comer proceeded to persecute him from behind till he fell down exhausted.

The Asiatic leopard is not distinguishable from the African variety, and is no less ferocious and cunning. (A slight exception must be made in the case of the Javanese animal known as the Black Leopard, but here the distinction is merely one of colour, this kind possessing a coat of much darker shade than that of the better-known species.)

Of the Indian leopard's courage and intelligence a very good picture is given by the late George Thomas Vigne—



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his day a well-known English barrister and traveller, and a friend of Outram's. While staying at an Indian military station, he was invited by some British officers to a leopard-hunt, which was to be carried on on elephant-back. Outside the village from which they started, the hunters encountered one or two badly maimed pariahs, and, further on, the carcass of one of these animals, which the busy jackals had not yet cleared away—a sure sign that a leopard was somewhere in the vicinity. For, even though the pariah is not a favourite dish of his, he regards it as a useful “stand-by,” should other victuals fail. When there is no promise of a more succulent diet, the artful leopard will hang about the outskirts of a village at night, howling and snarling in a manner that, if he is perfectly well aware, will bring out all the pariahs within miles—and their name is generally legion. These he keeps baying and yelping round him, retreating when he shows signs of approaching, and advancing whenever he seems inclined to flee. Suddenly the leopard, in a couple of springs, is in the very midst of the pack, and before they can escape, has generally wounded, if not killed, three or four, and is off to his lair with one of them in his teeth.

As the hunting-party came to the verge of a slightly wooded tract of land the elephants (of which there were three) began to evince every sign of uneasiness, and that on which Mr. Vigne was riding required all its *mahout's* arguments and endearments to persuade it to go farther. The howdah with Vigne were two officers and an English ally, and so great was the elephant's terror that these were rocked backwards and forwards, and jostled together though they were in a storm-tossed boat.

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Then, looking downwards, the *mahout* uttered an exclamation and pointed excitedly to the rear of a bush where a magnificent leopard was sleepily stretching himself. One of the young officers cocked his gun, but the lady, crying gaily, "No ; I claim the first shot," aimed at the beast, fired—and missed. Instantly the leopard sprang forward in sudden fright at the report, and, striding away, was soon out of sight.

The elephants now seemed as anxious for the chase as before they were averse to it, and they thundered merrily through the brushwood and over the short dry grass as they enjoyed their task. But they had gone barely a quarter of a mile when they were seized with the same extraordinary terror as before ; and after endeavouring to turn tail and flee, they halted obstinately and stood quivering.

"He must be in one of these trees," said one of the Englishmen, looking round him.

Vigne began to feel decidedly uncomfortable. To be imprisoned on the back of an elephant that persisted in remaining stationary just in a position where an exasperated, if not a hungry, leopard may conveniently drop on to you from a tree is not consoling.

For a long time every one eagerly scanned the branches of the two or three nearest trees in vain ; for the leopard seems to be perfectly conscious that his peculiar marking is in itself a protection where, on a thickly foliated tree it would take the keenest of eyes to distinguish between his spots and the leaves.

"I see him," whispered the lady suddenly, pointing to the prong made by the junction of the trunk with the second lowest of the boughs of the nearest tree. There



### A COOL HUNTRESS

The lady's first shot missed, but the second one wounded the leopard. The infuriated animal hurled himself like a shapeless cannon ball at the huntress, but missed his aim, and was then shot through the brain by the plucky little woman.



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animal was spread out in comfortable assurance that could not be reached by bullet or spear. Nor could have been if the hunters had been on foot ; for no sane man would have dared to fire at him from the ground, altered as he was by the broad limb of the tree from any but a trifling wound.

But from the howdah it was another matter. There was only a difference in elevation of about five feet between him and his pursuers, nor was the spot where Vigne's (the nearest) elephant was standing more than twenty feet from the tree-trunk.

Snatching up a double-barrelled gun, the lady again fired, and, this time, hit what she was aiming at. Then came a scream from the driver, and a vigorous trumpeting from the elephant, which promptly backed ; while it seemed to Vigne as though a shapeless black cannon-ball were coming straight at him : for the leopard, wounded in the right ribs, had made a spring at the shooter. The elephant only backed just in time : the leopard had judged his leap to a nicety, and must have pitched clean on the howdah's head ; as it was, he fell to the ground a foot or so away from the elephant's fore-feet. The terrified driver lost no time in scrambling into the howdah, where Vigne and the officers stood waiting for the chance of a shot.

But once more the lady pressed forward, and said boldly, " Let me take my second shot, please."

As she spoke, both elephant and howdah rocked violently, and in another moment the head of the wounded leopard appeared within an inch of where the howdah had been seated, and, digging his claws mercilessly into the maddened elephant's hide, he was making ready



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in a determined manner for a further spring at the occupants of the howdah.

The men looked blankly at each other ; to stand by and let the enraged brute run *amok* among them was carrying courtesy and the *noblesse oblige* maxim rather far. But the plucky little woman now lost no time in getting her second barrel into action ; and before the report of her shot had died away, the leopard fell lifeless to the ground, pierced through eye and brain.

Much might be written about the cheetah, or hunting-leopard, an animal that in days gone by has been a great source of trouble to zoologists with an itch for scrupulously correct classification. For though this beast is to all intents and purposes a leopard, he has no more idea than a horse of climbing a tree or of tearing his prey with his claws. His true place is no doubt among the cats, but he differs from all of them in having claws much more like those of a dog, and consequently unfitted for climbing or rending. In appearance he is simply a slightly built leopard, his tail, however, being ringed instead of spotted. He is commonly found in both Africa and Asia, but the inhabitants of the former continent have never succeeded in taming and training him as, for untold centuries, the Asiatics have done. Consequently the African cheetah is the only variety that can be regarded as exclusively wild.

This animal seems fully conscious of his physical defects : his leaping power is poor when compared to the leopard's ; he is by no means fleet of foot, and he possesses no great powers of endurance. Therefore he carries on his hunting by means of an elaborate system of hiding, crouching, and making unexpected springs, his favourite

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harry being the antelope. The great point in his favour is that he will never attack a human being, and will not even kill or molest so much as a deer, unless he is hungry, unless—as is the case with the Persian and Indian cheetah—he has been specially educated by man for such purpose.

## CHAPTER XII

### ADVENTURES AMONG JACKALS AND HYÆNAS

The jackal or *tschakkal*.—A virtue which he shares with the hyæna.—The lion the jackal's provider.—A night in the Sahara.—Strange sight seen by Richardson.—Begging jackals.—When the jackal is dangerous.—Mr. Elliott's adventure with a solitary jackal.—The hyæna.—A disgusting beast.—Some other sights seen by Richardson.—John Duncan of Whydah.—The *pakatoo*.—The animal's immense strength.—Between fever, mosquitoes, starvation, and being eaten alive.—Duncan's terrible experience with the wolf-hyæna.—Cut off from his weapons.—Holding out till aid comes.—Saved by his servant's arrival.

THE jackal (which word is a corruption of the Arabic *tschakkal*) is simply a wild dog, and if we include him in the same chapter with the hyæna, it is less on account of the possible relationship between the two than because of their being near neighbours geographically, and of their sharing in common a virtue which should make man to some extent tolerant of them. As to the question of relationship, the hyæna no doubt forms a sort of bridge between the cat and the dog tribes.

This common virtue alluded to is their readiness to act as scavengers and street-cleaners, and without them the South and East would be fifty times more subject to every kind of plague than they are already. Not a day

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asses there but some animal dies naturally or by violence, and these useful creatures are always on hand to eat or remove the carcass, which, after a few hours' exposure to tropical sun, would render the neighbourhood both intolerable and poisonous.

The jackal is found pretty much throughout Africa and the hot parts of Asia ; in appearance he is a strange mixture of fox, wolf, and collie ; his height at the shoulder about fifteen inches. The old story of his being the lion's provider, which has come down to us from the ancient Indian scientists, is rather laughed at by the modern traveller, and James Richardson, the African explorer, assures us that the boot is quite on the other leg : that packs of jackals follow the lion at a respectful distance to "clear up after him"—in other words, to devour whatever he may be pleased to leave of the animal that he has slain.

While Richardson was being detained in the Sahara, he and his European companions were one night startled by some inexplicable cries unlike anything he had ever heard before. Dr. Overweg suggested that they might proceed from jackals, but Richardson had many a time come in contact with these animals, and doubted the resemblance of this noise to their characteristic bark.

The night was a bitterly cold one, more characteristic of Russia than the Sahara ; and, while waiting for their Arab guides to return from an errand to an adjacent native camp, the explorers gathered what wood they could find, and soon made a blazing fire. No sooner had this well caught than the mysterious noise increased tenfold, and, coming nearer, grew more and more like the ordinary

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howl of a jackal-pack. Richardson picked up a gun and stepped warily beyond the range of the firelight; but the night was too dark for him to see anything except an indistinct moving blur, and he returned to the fire once more, not wishing to be too far from safety when the neighbouring lions came on their nightly rounds.

Suddenly a glare of flame shot up some distance away, evidently the newly lit fire of some encamping caravan. The flame glowed and spread, and by its light the travellers soon distinguished fifty small animal forms that had stationed themselves on a spot midway between the two fires—jackals beyond a doubt.

“But what are they doing? Look at them!” cried Richardson.

All three men rose, and ran a few steps towards the creatures in order to get a better view. The jackals were nearly all on their hind-legs in a “begging” attitude, with paws extended.

“What does that mean?” asked the Englishman of an Arab servant who now approached them.

The Arab looked, and then said, laughing heartily, “They are only warming themselves. Did you not know by their strange cries that they were cold?”

“What! warming themselves fifty yards away from a fire?”

The Arab laughed again, and explained that “jackals, not daring to come near the flame, yet feeling cold, are in the habit of holding up their fore-paws in imitation of men whom they have seen spreading out their hands to a blaze.”

As an instance of the ease with which these creatures



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in be at least partially tamed, Richardson found that, the least encouragement, several of them would allow themselves to be tempted quite near to the camp, and when bits of meat were thrown to them, they would "sit and beg for more."

So long as jackals remain in packs they give man little cause to dislike them, for their attentions are in the main confined to "clearing up," or to hunting down an occasional antelope. The latter form of diversion is carried on by a systematic running down of the game, and driving it towards some precipice, over which the terrified animal takes its last leaps in despair; and the pack, sweeping down some side-path, speedily devour the maimed or lifeless body. They will also smell out and run down any wounded animal, falling upon him without mercy.

But it is when the jackal elects to separate himself, either entirely or temporarily, from his kind that he gets into man's bad books. At such times he develops into burglar, body-snatcher, poacher, and sheep-lifter, and so, sooner or later, meets his just doom. Mr. C. B. Elliott, a clever archæologist and naturalist, more than once came in contact with one of these solitary jackals in Egypt. On one occasion he found that a stirrup-leather was missing from his tent, and, not long after, some cold fowls and an uncooked bird vanished. Having no reason to suspect his servant of the theft, he lay in wait one evening, hidden behind a temporary screen of spare canvas. Fired of his watching, he was at last nodding off to sleep, when an overpowering stench filled the tent, and announced the presence of either a fox or a pole-cat, or something worse. Mr. Elliott peered over the screen, and saw a jackal minutely examining every hole and corner of

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the tent. Not at all sure that, finding the place destitute of victuals, the jackal would not soon smell him out and make a meal of him, the Englishman put an end to such an unpleasant possibility by sending a pistol-ball into the would-be thief's body.

This feat led to a sudden access of popularity that was almost embarrassing, for Elliott's Arab servant, who was cursed with a clacking tongue, spread the news far and wide, so that for the next few days the jackal-slayer was pestered with visits from herdsmen and petty farmers who brought gifts and congratulations ; for this particular beast had long been a thorn in the side of the native stock-breeders ; and if he was guilty of all the crimes that were laid to him, it was high time his career was brought to a close. Fifty goats and two hundred heads of poultry were only items of the total he was supposed to have made off with, in the course of a month or two.

The disgusting charge of disinterring and devouring human corpses which is often brought against the African jackal rests on no very certain foundation. No doubt he has done such things in his time, when driven by hunger, but the practice is not an essential characteristic of him. Unfortunately, where the hyæna is concerned, there is no room for doubt as regards this revolting habit.

Even the wolf is a cleanly, handsome, and courageous beast when compared with the hyæna ; and but for his useful habit already mentioned, one would say that the sooner his whole tribe is shot down the better.

When Richardson parted from his companions for his solitary march towards Lake Tchad, by way of Zinder,

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he saw this creature at his worst. At a town near Zinder where he was forced to stay for some time horrible stories were passed from mouth to mouth of these pests having slunk into houses at night and run off with children ; one was even said to have carried off and half devoured a sleeping man. From the hut where Richardson lay, he saw a hyæna approach a cattle-pen and carry off a calf as big as the beast himself.

In performing this feat the hyæna showed his customary caution and sagacity by seizing the victim by the throat, so that it could not cry out. Whatever animal he attacks, he is careful to proceed in such a manner that his captive cannot bite or scratch him.

A perverse fate had lodged the explorer within sight of the spot where public executions took place, and not only were these cheerful sights occasionally forced upon his notice, but from time to time he surprised hyænas in the very act of mangling or carrying off the dead bodies, which, by local law, were left to the mercies of these loathsome brutes. Hard by, among the rocks, was what was known as the hyæna's den, and before leaving the town, Richardson explored this abode ; but the stench and the sight of the grinning creatures that from time to time poked their heads out of the various holes soon drove him away.

The average African native has a contempt for, rather than a horror of, the hyæna ; the weapon that has slain one is defiled for ever, and must not be used again. So cowardly is the creature that the blacks consider that the killing of him is women's and children's work ; and they are content to maim him with stones or blind him

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with mud, and then to hand him over to their wives and little ones, and let them finish him.

An even closer knowledge than Richardson's of the African hyæna fell to the lot of John Duncan, Vice-Consul at Whydah, who has been mentioned in the preceding chapter. The particular variety that he had to do with was the wolf-hyæna, locally called the *pakatoo*, and known to frequenters of the Zoological Gardens as the "laughing hyæna." This *pakatoo* appeared to trouble himself less about dead bodies than living ones, though a carcass never seemed to come amiss; but he would sneak into the towns, even in broad daylight, and carry off a pig or a sheep.

A horse belonging to one of the English officers stationed at the coast died, and Duncan ordered part of the carcass to be left on the beach, while he lay in wait to see what would happen. As much of the dead horse as two strong men could carry was left, and, almost before Duncan could retreat to his hiding-place, a wolf-hyæna appeared on the scene, and, seizing this mass of meat in his jaws, was quickly dragging it away when Duncan shot him through the body.

While the explorer was journeying inland to settle a dispute among the natives, his camp was invaded one night by two of these vermin, but fortunately the horses made such a commotion that the Vice-Consul was able to pistol one *pakatoo* and to drive away the other before any harm was done; for no horse or dog, and, indeed, few other animals, can endure even the trail of a hyæna, so abominable is the smell that clings to him.

Outside a small Dahoman village Duncan was attacked by one of his many fevers, and for several days lay half



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head, attended only by a faithful negro boy. No sooner was he convalescent than he was threatened by death from starvation, for the famine-stricken village could offer him no food, and the black boy had but dim notions about either hunting or civilized cooking.

One afternoon Duncan sat outside the house, gasping for a little air, yet driven mad by the attack of the mosquitoes which made for him the moment he put his head outside the door. For two days he had tasted nothing but stewed monkey and monkey soup, the preparation of which seemed to be the utmost extent of his servant's culinary abilities ; and, scarcely able to eat of such a dish, he was almost prostrated in nerve and body. As he sat trying fruitlessly to drive away the flies, he became conscious of a most powerful odour just behind him, and turning, saw a full-grown pakatoo within a yard of him, grinning and licking his chops.

The Vice-Consul's pistols were in the hut, and his boy had taken his only gun to go in search of deer. Enfeebled by fever and hunger, as well as by the prevailing heat, the unfortunate Scotsman could at first only stare open-mouthed at the horrible vision, and seemed powerless to spring towards the hut or even to cry out. Thus the two remained looking at each other for what seemed an hour, though probably much nearer half a minute. At last the horrible jaws of the pakatoo opened wider, and the creature broke into a loud, hysterical laugh, blood-curdling enough at the best of times, when one remembers that this laugh is generally a sort of grace before meat.

Cowardly and easily frightened as he is, the hyæna is an awful opponent when urged by hunger ; in proportion to his size he is one of the most muscular of living animals,



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and his jaws are so incredibly strong that he can with ease crunch up a horse's shank-bone ; and we may be sure that these facts were not far from uppermost in the explorer's mind as his visitor shuffled a few inches nearer to him. Half fainting from the nearness of the animal's foetid breath, he staggered to his feet, hoping to reach the hut and his pistols, which lay ready loaded. But, the moment he moved, the hyæna edged back a few inches, prepared, as a clear-headed man would have seen, either to fly at his victim or to run away.

Duncan was only conscious of the readiness to "fly," and this was doubly impressed upon him by the animal's suddenly moving between him and the hut-door. A more naturally manly fellow than he, could not well be ; even now he succeeded in pulling himself together sufficiently to raise his foot and administer a feeble kick at his tormentor. The pakatoo leapt back in time to avoid the boot, and seemed again as though he would flee ; but after reflection he moved off in a sideward direction to a distance of ten or twelve feet, stopped hesitatingly, and then slunk forward as though to walk round his prey.

The explorer again began to move towards the door, but, the moment he did so, the beast quickened his step so as to cut him off. Nothing is more pathetic than to see a really strong man brought low by sickness ; Duncan had once been the biggest man in the Royal Horse Guards, and a champion wrestler ; even a month before, he could have killed this brute with his hands ; but now, as he stood under the broiling sun, his head swam and his hands drooped useless at his sides. He essayed another kick, but a brown mist floated before his eyes, and for a minute he could scarcely see where the animal was.



### DUNCAN AND THE PAKATOO

Duncan sat outside his hut half dead from fever and starvation and maddened by mosquitoes, when he looked round and saw the grinning jaws of a huge pakatoo. He stared at it for some time, then aimed a feeble kick at it. Although he could a short time before have killed the brute with his hands, he was now so weak that matters would have ended tragically had not his boy come up and driven it away.



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Slight as was the movement of his foot, the faint-hearted hyæna jumped back again, though the hardest kick could not have reached him ; but by way of making things a little worse he had, in recoiling, thrust his buttocks in the very doorway of the hut, and there was entering it without walking over him. Then Duncan began shouting, but his voice seemed to die away in a painful quaver, while the buzzing in his ears and the cold dew on his forehead told him that, any moment now, he might fall prostrate ; and after that all hope of life would be gone.

But suddenly the sound of a voice singing in humdrum fashion caught his ear, and stealing a glance to his left, he saw his faithful negro walking slowly towards him, dragging behind him a small carcass. Duncan feebly waved his hand, and the black raised his gun reassuringly, and continued at a very leisurely pace towards his master.

“Come along,” cried the explorer faintly.

The negro grinned, and stopping, stood aside to point out the body of a young buck which trailed behind him. In vain the tormented man waved and called and pointed : the black could not be made to understand.

Then at last the hyæna came to the rescue himself ; raising up his voice, he gave vent to a cackle of laughter that attracted the black’s attention to him at once ; and, as the master sank back half swooning into his seat, the servant, wisely not letting go of their supper, came forward to the trot.

The hyæna saw the reinforcement ; he also saw and smelled the new-killed game, and he hesitated. Had the black been a sportsman, that hesitation would have cost the beast his life ; but unfortunately the lad had not

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thought good to reload his gun. He did the next best thing, however—picked up a stone as big as a brick and hurled it at the intruder ; the stone did not hit the mark but it hit the wooden hut with a report like a gunshot, and the cowardly beast fled as fast as his legs could carry him.



## CHAPTER XIII

### AMONG THE AUSTRALIAN WILD BEASTS

culiarities of Australian fauna.—The duckbill and the porcupine ant-eater.—The marsupials.—Lieutenant-Colonel Mundy.—A kangaroo-hunt on horseback.—The size of a giant kangaroo.—His method of flight from the dogs.—Brought to bay.—The kill.—The kangaroo as a food-animal and as a nuisance.—A battue.—Native methods of hunting.—Giving the dog a bath.

to the scientist Australia and its neighbourhood is indistinctly the most interesting of all the five continents, for geology, botany, and zoology proclaim it to be, in all probability, the oldest portion of the known earth. Here may be found animal forms that the rest of the world has never known or else has forgotten for untold centuries, and plants that date back to Jurassic and Carboniferous times.

Without going into the why and the wherefore of all this, it will be enough to state that Australia knows no large land animals, and that, with the exception of the dingo (and he is probably an importation) and of a few bats, rodents, and sea-mammals, all the wild beasts of this land and continent belong to the two lowest forms of mammalian life: the *Marsupialia*, or pouched animals, and those peculiar links with the birds and reptiles, the *Monotremata*,

## AMONG THE AUSTRALIAN

or egg-laying animals. Of the last-named, the two existing specimens are the ornithorhynchus (*i.e.*, "bird beak"), generally known as the duckbill, and the poupin ant-eater.

It is very doubtful whether a living duckbill has ever been brought to Europe, but a very excellent stuffed specimen may be seen at the museum at South Kensington. He is a brown, fur-coated little animal, with webbed fore-feet, a flat tail, and a bill or muzzle shaped very much like a duck's beak. On being interfered with he will try to bite, though his "bill" is too soft and flexible to cause much pain. But the male has another and more dangerous weapon in a spur or extra claw on each of his hind-feet. The average colonist believes that this claw is to the ornithorhynchus what fangs are to the snake, and that through it he can inject venom into the wound which it has made. In 1817 a hunter is said to have been thus poisoned, and there are similar tales of quite recent date; but in all likelihood the victim would have incurred blood-poisoning quite as readily from a cat's scratch.

The marsupials, which are the next step on the mammalian ladder, bring forth their young in a very imperfect state, and place them in a pouch (*marsupium*), where they pass through the ordinary nursing stage.

Of these pouched animals the kangaroo is naturally the best known, though the genus includes a large number, such as the Australian "bear," devil, Tasmanian "wolf," bandicoot, native "cat," flying squirrel, and a host of others. The kangaroos themselves are subdivided into about thirty species, of which the giant, or "cassidy," or *boomah*, is the most sought after by hunters.

## WILD BEASTS

It is the most capable of doing harm to man or other animals.

Kangaroo-hunts, when undertaken by means of horses and hounds, are pretty much alike ; but special features sometimes present themselves, which may make one particular hunt more interesting than another. One has been well described by a celebrated hunter, traveller, and draughtsman well known to the last generation—Lieutenant-Colonel Mundy. This keen observer was once making a tour of the Antipodes, and while staying in New South Wales was invited to a special hunt ; and in addition to this he had various opportunities of watching the methods of pursuit followed by the natives and the colonial stock-breeders.

The initial stages of his first chase scarcely differed from those of an ordinary English fox-hunt—that is to say, proceedings began with a meet ; a pack of trained hounds were there under an experienced whip, and these drew off after the approved manner ; and it was not long before the scent of a giant male kangaroo was discovered. It has been said above that Australia possesses no large animals. Probably no two people would agree as to the size of the giant kangaroo until they came to measure it. Even recognized naturalists do not give the same dimensions ; one gives the length of the animal as four feet, another as five, and a third as seven, while Colonel Mundy describes the beast of which we are now speaking as seven feet six inches from tip to tail, three feet of which was tail. The point is, How is he to be measured ? For stature and length of body are not quite the same thing ; and though tape-measure properly used cannot lie, a man's eyes may easily mislead him. The truth is that when the

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kangaroo squats on his hams, his height is about four feet but with no trouble he can erect himself on his hind-legs and so be equal in height to a six-foot man.

After a ride of a couple of miles, a small family of kangaroos was unexpectedly met with ; but they scuttled away at the barking of the dogs, and these, hot on the scent of the one they had been tracking, were not to be diverted. Through thicket and wooded valley and over bits of arid tableland, the whole cavalcade rode at whatever speed they might, a momentary excitement spreading among them from time to time as some one cried, " I see him. There he goes !" For a kangaroo-chase has the advantage over a fox-hunt—that the beast can often be seen a mile off.

After hearing various similar cries, the Colonel did his best to follow with his eye where the huntsmen were looking, and at last succeeded in catching sight of a moving grey-brown object that bobbed up and down in a grotesque manner, as though it worked on springs. The impression became the stronger as hunters and hunted got clear of some prettily undulating and wooded ground on to a far-reaching grassy plain that had only here and there a tree which could obstruct the view ; for the kangaroo could now plainly be seen taking a succession of regular leaps, each about four or five yards in length.

" Shall we ever come up with him at this rate ?" asked the Colonel of his host.

" Never at this rate," was the reply. " But he can't keep it up for ever ; he's getting blown already ; and the way he's going there's no water for him to take to."

Still, there was no appreciable gain on the animal for the next mile and a half, but after that the distance began

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dually to decrease ; either the kangaroo's leaps became shorter or else they were repeated in less quick succession, bit by bit his outline and colouring grew clearer, till length only a stone's-throw seemed to separate him from the dogs.

Colonel Mundy could now see that, at almost every other leap, the kangaroo looked hurriedly round at his pursuers, though to measure the distance between himself and them. This is an invariable precaution with him, and sometimes brings him into trouble, for he goes on leaping at the same, and not infrequently breaks his back or leg against a rock or tree-trunk, through not being able to see where he is going. Before long it was clear that the kangaroo had come almost to the end of his tether, and no doubt he knew it ; for, as the three nearest dogs reached within ten yards of him, he took an unexpected sideward leap, which landed him twelve feet or more at right angles to the path which he had hitherto been taking. In this way the dogs lost the advantage temporarily. But instead of jumping straight on in this new direction, the hunted beast began to spring straight forward once more, and the dogs were soon on him again. Another sideward leap followed ; then one forward ; then another sideward again. " He's done," said the Colonel's friend, checking his horse sharply. " Don't you see his game ? He's making for those trees."

A final glance round told the kangaroo that he had once more been successful in outdistancing the hounds, and now, either out of breath or anxious to store up what energy he could, he varied his means of progress. Hitherto he had been propelling himself apparently by means of his tail, which, stiffened and pointing to the ground, had



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seemed to drive him forward as a boat is pushed off by a oar or boat-hook, while his fore-legs dangled loosely and unoccupied across his chest. Now, however, he began to bring these fore-legs into play : falling forward on to them, he entered upon a sort of shuffle, levering up his hind-quarters by means of the fore-feet and still rigid tail. Then, when all four feet were together, he pushed forward the two front ones and repeated the levering process, and by this means, soon reached the grove of trees for which he had been aiming.

The hounds saw this economizing of breath and took example by it, except one or two of the younger and more impetuous, and these seemed very much inclined at first to rush upon an appalling fate. For, having gained his tree, the kangaroo erected himself, planted his back against the trunk, and tacitly dared the dogs to approach him.

The horsemen had all drawn up at a sufficient distance from the tree for the kangaroo to deceive himself into the belief that they had nothing to do with the hunt, but were merely cattle of a peculiar breed. Whether he thought so or no, he confined his attention to the dogs, kicking or savagely whenever one came nearer than the rest. Luckily for their own safety, the dogs would not venture far beyond the semicircle into which they had drawn themselves ; for one stroke of a kangaroo's hind-claw will cut to the bone, and even disembowel a dog at a single blow. Fights between two of these animals have been witnessed wherein one has literally torn the other to pieces with this awful weapon.

As the kangaroo gave no sign of moving onwards, and still less of allowing the hounds to come any nearer, or



### BROUGHT TO BAY

The kangaroo invariably tries to get his back to a tree or rock, and woe betide the unlucky dog which comes within reach of his formidable hind foot, for with one stroke he will rip up and kill him.



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the huntsmen unslung his rifle, fired at the animal, and put an end to him.

Among the Bush-dwellers and farm-hands Colonel Mundy found totally different kangaroo-hunting methods being followed. Here the notion was not so much one of sport as of the double necessity of finding food other than cotton, and of ridding the district of an animal which is only less of a foe to the sheep-farmer than the dingo is ; or if the dingo falls on the sheep and kills them, the kangaroo robs them of what little pasturage they have, and so takes their lives by taking "the means whereby they live."

Sometimes a hardy and well-tried hunter would go alone on foot or on horseback towards a family of kangaroos (they are never found in large herds, and rarely entirely alone), and, on getting within gunshot, would pick off the animals one by one as fast as he could reload. But for an inexperienced man to risk this sort of thing would be madness, if not suicide ; for the kangaroo, if very stupid, is at least no coward. Instead of running away, as a deer would do, the moment he sees his brother fall, he stares about him or runs helplessly up and down ; but when he at last discovers whence the firing is coming, he more often than not makes a dash in that direction.

At one farm the Colonel witnessed what is nowadays a great rarity, owing to a decrease in the kangaroo population—a kangaroo drive. This, like other battues, was in plain language a massacre. A line of beaters was stretched for miles round the stockyard, and all the kangaroos that happened to be enclosed by that line were gradually driven by shouts, and in some cases by blank-firing or blazing torches, towards the yard ; and here, safely en-

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closed by hurdles, they were shot down in almost a few minutes.

The method of beating by means of flambeaux was one which the colonists had learned from the aborigines. These, when hunting, divide themselves into two or more parties, and, by lighting fires in a huge circle, gradually drive the game towards the centre of it, and quickly dispatch them with clubs, spears, or boomerangs.

On another occasion the Colonel accompanied two colonists who were pursuing kangaroos on foot, with both dogs and guns, and a ludicrous though by no means uncommon scene occurred. After having secured a fairly good bag, the hunters succeeded in coming up with a big old male just as he reached the pool. Seeing no tree or bush or rock against which to support himself, the kangaroo leapt into the water, whither he was immediately followed by two of the dogs. Suddenly he turned on them, seized one of them in his fore-paws as though he were about to "dandle" him, and calmly proceeded not only to duck him in the water, but to keep him there. Luckily for the dog, one of the sportsmen was near enough to send a charge of shot into the kangaroo, and the hound was saved.

"But that's nothing," said one of the colonists. "I've seen a man held like that and drowned by one of these 'old soldiers.'"



## CHAPTER XIV

### HUNTING SEALS AND SEA-LIONS OF THE SOUTH

Southern seals.—The wreck of the *Grafton*.—Thrown ashore on the Auckland Islands.—The strange roaring in the woods.—A strange visitor.—Tough and tender meat.—Seal-hunting by boat.—A disappointment.—Fight between seal and sea-lion.—Narrow escape of Captain Musgrave.—How to kill a seal.—Condemned to perpetual seal-meat.—Climbing a tree to escape a bull-seal.—An important discovery.—Unwise prodigality.—A terrible retribution.—Besieged by infuriated “bulls.”—Boat-building under difficulties.—“Tom.”—Escape after twenty months of captivity.

BECAUSE the seal spends much of his time in the water, many of us are inclined, perhaps, to look upon him as a sort of half-bred fish, although he has as much right to be included among wild mammals as the hippopotamus or the Polar bear. Moreover, there is another popular misconception about him and his tribe—namely, that he is solely the product and property of the Arctic Regions. Yet Scotland, France, the Adriatic, the Cape, and the Falkland Islands all abound in seal colonies or “rookeries”; while the sea-lion is as much at home and as commonly found in Polynesia as in the Kuriles or the Aleutians.

Between the southern and northern sea-lion there is no special difference, but seals vary as much as wolves or bears, and the Far South affords some strange specimens

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that are quite unknown to many people ; among them being the black seal, the sea-elephant, and the sea-leopard.

When a man is imprisoned for nearly two years on an island in the South Seas where these animals are almost the only living creatures, he has a chance of studying their habits that few of us would covet. Such an opportunity fell to the lot of Thomas Musgrave, Captain of the *Grafton* schooner, which, in 1862, was wrecked off the Auckland Islands, two hundred miles south of New Zealand.

By good fortune the crew and some of the stores, tools, and ammunition, were landed safely in one of the boats, but the schooner and the rest of her boats were hopelessly ruined. Seeing, however, that they might have to remain here for an indefinite time, the Captain felt some anxiety as to the food-supply, particularly as a superficial inspection of the vicinity only disclosed a few widgeon or other migratory birds. A large hut was quickly constructed with ship's timbers and young tree-trunks, and the weary sailors lay down to sleep.

In the morning the Captain was more hopeful of his surroundings, for he and several of the men had distinctly heard during the night sounds that agreeably resembled the lowing of cattle ; and, with care, this should mean a constant supply of at least milk, meat, and clothing.

As one of the men opened the hut-door to let in the morning light and air, he started back with a loud exclamation, and seizing a crow-bar, brought it down heavily on the head of a "bull"-seal that measured nearly eight feet in length.

"Another minute, and he'd ha' had hold o' me," explained the sailor, as he endeavoured to drag the heavy carcass into the hut.

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“Something to eat, at any rate,” commented the Captain. “One or two of you lads skin him and cut some steaks for breakfast.”

The steaks were cut and broiled, but the crew pulled wry mouths as soon as they started to eat ; for the hardest ship’s “junk ” was not so tough as the flesh of that bull-seal. But shortly after breakfast, Captain Musgrave and his first mate shot four young seals within a quarter of a mile of the hut, and these, on being roasted for dinner, proved an agreeable contrast, for they were as tender and tasty as lamb.

During the next day nothing more was seen of the animals, though the cattle-like lowing from them continued in the woods around ; and, to husband the scanty stores, the men were obliged to return to the despised bull-seal, which they cut up and salted. In this there was much wisdom, for, during the next few days, a terrific storm broke over the island ; trees were uprooted, and the roof of the hut burst in, and for nearly a week it was as much as a man’s life was worth to go out in search of game.

The day on which the storm gave over was devoted to an attempt to refill the larder. Captain Musgrave and two sailors put off in their little leaky skiff, hoping to circumvent a seal that had been seen at some little distance from the shore ; while another party explored the woods that surrounded the hut. The seal which the Captain went to chase continued to disport himself at his ease till the boat had pulled to within comfortable gunshot, then perversely began to swim out to sea. As the chances of game on land would be meagre for at least the next day or two, Musgrave was very unwilling to lose this opportunity, and so signed to the rowers to keep up the pursuit.

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The race continued for nearly half a mile, and then the seal made a sudden sharp turn to the right. The rowers rapidly altered their course, and now began to get a little nearer to the runaway ; but he, perceiving this, turned once more towards the shore, swimming at an obtuse angle to the line which he had just been following. Again the boat pulled round, and when the seal was within a hundred yards of the beach, the Captain fired. The charge struck the water so close to the seal's head that he stopped, either from fright or curiosity, and, having sniffed all round him, turned to look at the approaching boat. Before he could make up his mind what to do, the rowers were almost up with him, and Musgrave fired again, this time at so short a range that the animal's head was blown to pieces.

“ Stand by to pull him in when he comes up,” said the Captain triumphantly to the nearer oarsman.

But the seal never did come up ; he sank like lead to the bottom and stayed there, and the mortified sailors realized that their afternoon's work had been thrown away.

“ Pull in,” said Musgrave ; “ we've not seen this part of the coast.”

Having drawn the boat out of reach of the tide, the three adventurers walked slowly along the shore, painfully conscious, from their not having heard a single gun go off, that no game worth the killing had been seen by the other hunters. The two seamen had paused to halve the stem of a broken branch to make it into a couple of clubs, when the Captain, who continued to stroll on, gave a sharp whistle and stood still. The men hurried to his side, and there, on the farther side of an immense rock, beheld a

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most extraordinary sight : a huge black bull-seal fighting furiously with a sea-lion, neither making a sound above an occasional half-suppressed grunt of pain or rage.

One of the men, who knew something of sealing, wasted little time in staring, but, shouting to his fellow to come on, charged at the combatants with his club poised for action ; but the second man stood gaping, spell-bound. Musgrave, with his gun at the shoulder, pushed in front of the astonished sailor just as the first man dealt the sea-lion a sounding crack across the neck. With a roar that was most uncomfortably reminiscent of the land-lion, the animal swung himself round, and rearing up on his hind flippers, prepared to attack his assailant, whose short stick seemed but a puny weapon with which to slay a brute fifteen feet long and weighing about thirteen hundredweight. The Captain fired, and the sea-lion fell on all-fours again, and, though now seemingly unable to move, still continued to gnash his teeth at the sailor with the club. Forgetful of the seal, the Captain, still pointing his gun, began to walk round in order to use his second barrel on the lion's head, which he could not reach from where he had been standing. His finger had almost pulled the trigger when a great black object reared itself immediately in front of him ; something struck him heavily on the shoulder, and he fell backwards. The seal had profited by the occasion to make a blind charge at the shooter. As the Captain fell, his gun-butt struck a rock, and his finger being already on the trigger, the charge exploded, the bullet passing perilously near to his own forehead.

Falling as he had done immediately in front of the rock, there was no rearward escape for him, and the infuriated



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seal remained with eyes and teeth flashing and claws extended, as though daring him to get up. Sliding his hand down the barrels, Musgrave grasped the gun firmly by them, and swung it round with tremendous force at the "bull's" head. But the animal was too quick for him, and, before he knew where he was, the weapon was torn out of his hand as if his grip had been no more than a child's ; the seal had caught the stock deftly in his teeth, which held it like a vice.

But now the frightened seaman, whose heart was a great deal better than his nerves, cried out, " All right, sir ; let him keep his teeth at work on that ; I'll——"

" On the nose, Bill—on the nose," roared the more experienced sailor, as his own weapon fell with a dull crash across that part of the sea-lion's head.

Two rapid sideward blows from the club knocked the black seal over on his back, and a third across the under side of the muzzle put an end to him. For neither the seal proper, nor any of his various relatives, which, on account of their shape, their marking, or their noise, have gained the name of bear, leopard, lion, elephant, etc., can withstand a heavy blow on the nose if scientifically delivered ; lances and even guns are pooh-poohed by the expert sealer, who asks for nothing better than a well-seasoned cudgel or an axe whose haft can be relied upon.

As both beasts were now dead and the Captain unhurt, the three men jubilantly skinned and cut up the carcasses, and conveyed as much of their prize to the boat as it would hold. Landing near the hut, they met the second body of hunters, who had been scouring the woods. These had brought back nothing except the news that, along the shore in the opposite direction, they had come

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cross a few "calves," and that as soon as they went to attack these, three bull-seals had rushed upon the hunters and put them to flight.

From that time forward it seemed as though the hapless crew would be dependent for most of the necessities of life on these animals, for, with the exception of a few roots, seal-flesh formed their staple diet; their clothes and boots were of seal-skin; their light at night was from seal-oil; their sewing-cotton the hair from the manes of sea-lions; in fact, the very ink with which Captain Musgrave wrote his celebrated "log" was seal's blood.

In this way month after month went by, and all chance of their being sighted by a passing ship seemed to be hopeless. When salted seal ran short, fresh had to be obtained, often at serious risk of loss of life; for an expert clubber of seals is not made in a day or even in a year; and ammunition was now so scarce that the Captain dared not allow a gun to be fired.

One day he and the first mate and a seaman went hunting on the only quarter of the island which had not yet been explored. The incessant roaring and bleating in the woods promised good store of sport and excitement; and following the sounds, the three came suddenly upon a couple of female seals with a group of calves. These they disposed of without ceremony, and they were stacking up the bodies preparatory to sending men to fetch them with hand-barrows, when an old bull, presumably just aroused from sleep, rushed from behind a fallen tree-trunk, and made a dash at the intruders. The Captain was unarmed, having broken his club over the head of the second cow, and he wisely jumped out

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of the way ; and, finding that he was unpursued, sought about for a new weapon. The mate struck hurriedly at the bull, which caught the club in his teeth, and rapidly converted it into splinters. The seaman also hit out manfully, but, in his excitement, missed his aim, and only by a miracle kept his leg out of the brute's mouth. This was well for him, for even a small bull can break a man's thigh-bone in his jaws.

"Tree ! tree !" shouted the mate ; and both climbed out of danger just as the bull reared, ready to bite or claw.

While his allies were thus establishing what is probably a record in the annals of seal-hunting, the Captain was not idle. With one eye on his work and the other on the bull, which, fortunately for him, continued to roar round the treed men, he broke down a stout sapling, twisting it backwards and forwards, and hacking the fibres with his knife till it was free ; and, thus armed with a seven-foot pole, returned to the charge. A great deal has been written about the seal's sense of hearing, and many people maintain that the true (or earless) seal can only hear when under water. At any rate, this particular beast could not have been very deaf, for no sooner did the Captain tread on some dead sticks than it rounded on him open-mouthed. But a good eye and a good nerve, when backed by a quarterstaff stout enough to bring down an elephant, form a useful protection against the assault of the most ferocious of seals ; and, after being felled by the first blow, the animal succumbed to the second.

A further result of this little excursion was the discovery of an adjacent island shaped like a figure 8, which

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proved to be the home of a huge colony of seals ; and henceforward the men might congratulate themselves that there was no fear of starvation. But this abundance was not an unmixed blessing. In recent years civilized governments have realized the necessity of checking the wholesale slaughter of seals, by agreeing upon a long close season, and prohibiting the killing of adult females. The danger of indiscriminate execution among the cows and calves did not occur to the sailors ; the bulls seemed to have disappeared, and there was no apparent reason why the young and tender should not go into the salt-pot as long as the old and tough were not on hand to prevent it. And this improvidence had like to have cost the shipwrecked men dear.

More months passed ; more and more hunting journeys to " Figure of Eight Island " were made ; and meanwhile the Captain, now wholly despairing of their ever being picked up by a ship, was superintending the building of a good-sized vessel. One day some men who had been sealing on the next island came rowing ashore at top speed, and, scarcely stopping to beach the skiff, ran excitedly up to the Captain. They had had a great difficulty, they said, in finding any more calves or cows, and, while they were searching, a small school of bulls came upon them so suddenly that they had bare time to scramble into the boat and push off ; even then some of the larger animals had pursued them nearly to their own shore.

Then, when it was too late, Musgrave realized what a piece of madness he had been party to. The breeding season was beginning ; the time when the bulls that hitherto have been living in the water come ashore, and



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fight to the death often take place between them.\* And he thought with a shudder of what might happen were their own island invaded by an army of these pugnacious brutes.

The next morning it seemed as though his worst fears were well grounded, for the crew were awakened at dawn by a deafening thunder of roars ; the whole island seemed to shake with the noise, and, on looking towards the little ship-building yard, they saw a score of bulls waddling round it. This might mean paralysis as far as the progress of their boat was concerned ; and with a very heavy heart the Captain unlocked the outhouse where his jealously harboured cartridges, gunpowder, and lead were stored ; for to meet an attack from a whole cohort of bulls would require some more forcible weapons than clubs. But the resolute and cheerful faces of his crew set him somewhat at rest, and, telling off a few men with guns to keep the enemy at a distance, he set the boat builders to work again. And thus these plucky fellows laboured on, day after day, threatened with disablement (sometimes that threat was carried out) or with death at any minute ; sometimes forced to give up their work and retire before a systematic charge from the bulls, till it seemed as though the vessel never could be finished.

One amusing feature helped to lighten the monotony. An old bull, which in course of time became known as "Tom," daily took up a position on a flat rock and watched the builders at their work. He was too aged and inactive to do much harm, and a great deal too tough

\* For further details as to these combats and the establishment of seal "rookeries," see chap. xxiii. of "The Romance of the World's Fisheries," by S. Wright (Seeley and Co.).



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to be killed for provender ; and this the old creature seemed to know, for he continued to look on superciliously, obstinately refusing to stir for anybody.

At last, in spite of the seals' efforts to the contrary, the boat was finished and stored, and the plucky crew escaped from their prison after twenty months of captivity.

## CHAPTER XV

### AMONG THE SMALLER MONKEYS

An animal difficult of classification.—Instinct *versus* reasoning-power.—The monkeys of the Malay Archipelago.—Dr. Adams' adventure.—Among the siamangs.—Sun-worshipping monkeys.—A mischievous midshipman.—A pathetic instance of motherly love.—Monkeys that cannot run.—Some more sun-worshippers.—The proboscis monkeys.—Conchologists.—Naval officers held up by monkeys.—The ship's gun to the rescue.—The loris, or Asiatic lemur.—Strange sight seen by Dr. Mouat.—A Siamese gibbon and a poisonous snake.—Where the monkeys have it all their own way.—India's sacred quadrumana.—Two ludicrous anecdotes.—Rev. C. Acland's alarming experience in Bengal.—How to frighten an Indian wild beast.

THE monkey enjoys the distinction of being the wild beast which in shape most closely resembles the members of the human race, and in character comes painfully near being like savage or irresponsible man. To classify this immense family is no easy matter; the simplest method for our present purpose will be to say that the Old World monkeys fall into two groups, large and small; and that, of the small, the majority are found in the more easterly parts of the globe.

The little creatures have ever been a byword for mischief and trickery, and these more innocent points in their character have been so emphasized and insisted upon by

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writers, that their better and worse points—their wonderful cleverness together with their spite and ferocity—are often, to a great extent, lost sight of. Of course, there is practically no comparison between the monkey-brain and that of the most ordinary human being ; nevertheless, those who have studied the matter closely have told us that monkeys really do possess a certain amount of true reasoning power, and by consequence they perhaps rely less on sheer animal instinct than does, for instance, the lion or the dog. In this way the poor monkey seems rather to be between two stools, possessing less instinct to guide his actions than most other beasts, and at the same time having the little knowledge that is a dangerous thing, which he has acquired either by imitation or by his own glimmerings of rationality.

It is no doubt on this account that we hear tales of monkeys having sufficient sense to light a fire, and yet lacking the wit to feed it and keep it going ; or of a monkey picking up a weighty stone and carrying it till he is worn out with fatigue, because it has not occurred to him to drop his burden when tired, as even the stupidest dog would do.

Among the smaller quadrumana we do not see so much of the revengeful spirit that characterizes the great apes and the baboons ; they seem conscious of their inability to do serious harm to man, and therefore, when one of their number is killed, instead of banding together against the slayer, they will flee in panic, only staying to pick up and carry away with them the dead body of their comrade. But an exception to this rule must be made when the animal killed is young enough to be still under its mother's protection. Dr. Adams, R.N., of Sir Edward Belcher's

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expedition, came across an interesting example of this while cruising in the East Indian Archipelago.

The doctor and some other officers had gone ashore for a few hours' sport, and a little before sunset were lounging and idling in a hill-grove, gathering cocoa-nuts and watching the evolutions of the land-crabs and plantain-squirrels. Suddenly a midshipman, who had climbed a tree and was busily throwing down cocoa-nuts, cried out, "Look out, there; there's a whole regiment of black monkeys getting down from those trees ahead."

The officers aroused themselves, and saw, not far away, an immense company of siamangs dropping from the branches to the ground, and there collecting in something like systematic order.

"What's that old fellow up to, I wonder?" said the first lieutenant, pointing to an aged and somewhat infirm monkey that had been marshalling the rest, and now, placing himself at the head, was solemnly looking towards the setting sun.

"H'sh! Keep quiet," whispered the surgeon. "He's the monkey-chief. These little beggars are sun-worshippers. Listen."

There was no need to request anyone but a deaf man to "listen," for, as Dr. Adams finished speaking, the whole band of black-coated devotees set up the most extraordinary chorus of yelling that ever man heard—a chorus that, without exaggeration, could have been heard two or three miles away. It is with such a noise as this that the siamangs daily greet the rising or setting sun.

"That's sun-worship, is it?" said a junior lieutenant.

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‘I’ll make ’em take it a little farther off, at any rate ;’ and he was aiming with his gun when the doctor sharply ordered him not to interfere.

“Now watch,” said Adams.

The evening devotions ended, the monkeys were now undergoing a sort of roll-call, or inspection. The old chief was sedately walking round his subjects, and the mothers were brushing up and smoothing down their little ones with a view to making them look nice.

The little midshipman, who had now descended from his tree, began to creep towards this remarkable collection, and, being something of an adept at throwing, picked up a stone and had hurled it with some force at the monkey-group before the older officers were aware that he had climbed down. The stone certainly hit a mark of some kind, for, a few seconds after it fell, there was a repetition of the former general howling, this time shriller and more piercing ; then the animals turned, sprang into the nearest trees, and fled, continuing their wild screaming. One old monkey was left standing, or stooping rather, in the same place. The boy ran on towards the spot, and Dr. Adams followed him at a brisk walk, with the intention of telling the mischievous youth one or two plain home-truths.

As the doctor came up, he saw that the stone had struck a baby siamang, wounding one of its legs so that the poor little creature lay moaning and trembling, in spite of its mother’s encouraging chirps and gestures. The boy was now making grabs at the smaller monkey, each of which was skilfully frustrated by the mother, who contrived every time to interpose her body between him and her offspring.



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“ Here ! you come out of it ; you’ve done enough mischief for one day,” said the surgeon, good-humouredly taking the midshipman by the shoulder and throwing him to one side.

But the mother saw no distinction between the nefarious designs of the boy and the benevolent intentions of the man ; and, considering him a new and more formidable foe, snatched the little one up in her arms and ran half a dozen steps towards a tree close at hand. But the weight was too great for her, and she was soon obliged to reduce her speed ; for the siamang, like many other essentially “ tree ” monkeys, makes but a poor show when walking or running : the arms are unduly long, and more accustomed to be employed for climbing than for any other purpose ; therefore, if there be no tree near, the animal can easily be overtaken.

Anxious to observe her more closely, though unwilling to take her prisoner or rob her of her little one, the young surgeon came up with her again, and she, conscious of her inability to outrun him, placed her charge on the ground, fenced it in with her arms, and turned savagely on the intruder, with teeth ready to snap on the first opportunity. Then the doctor sought very gently to put her aside with his foot, but instantly she bit at his leg, and, finding his stout leather gaiter resist her teeth, she made a mournful sobbing noise, and shuffled a few inches away, still keeping her hands on the ground, and thus moving her offspring along with her.

The other men had now strolled up, and even then, though terribly frightened at this increase of the enemy’s force, the plucky little mother still stood her ground, mumbling to herself, and threatening the bystanders with

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er teeth. Her behaviour was the more heroic in that the siamang is proverbially dense and slow of apprehension, and has as little notion of self-defence as a baby, where the giving or the parrying of a blow is concerned. Genuinely affected by such a pathetic picture, all the sailors drew back a few yards, and the mother, quick to seize her opportunity, once more caught up her young one, and this time succeeded in swinging herself on to a low bough, and was soon out of sight.

As the party moved down towards the beach to await their boat, they witnessed another evidence of sun-worship among the monkeys. On the edge of the grove they came upon a tree that was laden with some hideous-looking animals, three or four feet long, and red-brown in colour, relieved on the cheeks and shoulders by a bright orange tint.

"Proboscis monkeys," said the doctor, pausing. "Give them a wide berth ; they're vicious. No more stone-throwing, if you don't mind ; a crowd like this would tear us to pieces in a few minutes."

The sportsmen unslung their guns in case of need, and, stepping lightly, walked well wide of the tree till they were beyond it and into the open again, when all stopped to have a good look at these ugly forest-dwellers. It need scarcely be said that the animals have gained their name from the extraordinary length of their noses. With their bare, yellow faces, beard-like neck-frills, and the exaggerated nasal development aforesaid, they looked in the sunset-light positively devilish ; and only a keen naturalist like Dr. Adams could have found much pleasure in remaining in their immediate vicinity.

The whole collection presented a strange picture. Two

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were fighting tooth and nail ; a couple of score were placidly watching the sun as it sank over the sea ; some others, seated on a broad limb of the tree, were asleep, resting on their hams, their heads nodding on their breasts ; while some of the younger ones, distinguished by their absence of proboscis, were capering about, biting their own or their neighbours' tails. The doctor was afterwards informed by the Dyaks that these monkeys are regarded by them as runaway men who have fled from the villages to the forests in order to avoid the heavy local taxation.

The sailors walked on again, clambered down the little cliff, and gained the upper beach, where a more strange sight than they had yet witnessed was awaiting them. About forty proboscis monkeys were stalking solemnly up and down the shingle, stooping every now and then to pick up and examine shells, molluscs, or stones, with the intense interest of conchologists. Their movements and attitudes were so grotesque that all the officers burst into a loud laugh.

"We'd better have kept our mouths shut," said the doctor, checking his own merriment, as the monkeys looked up from their occupation and eyed them somewhat savagely. "We must steer round them somehow."

"Too late," said one of the lieutenants. "Look at the brutes ; they mean mischief."

With a good deal of spluttering and chattering, the monkeys were certainly getting ready for an attack : some were picking up stones, as though with hostile intent ; others were moving stealthily and menacingly towards the group of men. The pinnacle, which should have been

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waiting, had not yet put off from the ship, and if the sportsmen got beyond the monkeys down to the water-edge, they would still be between the deep sea and a very good imitation of the devil.

“Fire a volley over their heads when I give the word,” said the first lieutenant in a low voice. “If that doesn’t frighten them, we must give them something that will.”

Each man fired off one barrel at the word of command, and, for an instant, the monkeys seemed stupefied; but the next, they rushed with one accord towards the gunners.

It was an extremely awkward moment. No one likes to appear ridiculous; yet, whether the officers treated the monkeys’ charge seriously, and sought to repel it by deliberately firing on them; whether they picked up stones and pelted them; or whether they frankly turned tail and ran, knowing that these, like the siamangs, are slow of foot, the position was equally undignified.

From it they were suddenly rescued by an ally that all might have counted upon, yet had forgotten—the ship’s sunset-gun. As the first lieutenant was about to give the word for a second and more deadly volley, a sudden flash and puff of smoke came from the ship’s side, followed immediately by the crash of one of the big guns, which announced that a pinnace was putting off, to take on board any of the ship’s company that might be ashore. The report echoed among the hills and trees, and, before it had died away, every monkey had scaled the cliff and disappeared, deafened and terrified by the unexpected shock.



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The East Indies have a curious little connecting-link between the monkeys of the Old World and those of the New in the loris, a sort of tailless lemur. Many of these funny little animals were seen by Surgeons Mouat and Playfair of the Indian Army, during their survey of the Andaman Islands. These creatures are distinguished by their large bright eyes, rounded foreheads, and pointed snouts. In colour they are grey, lightening into white on the under parts of the body.

Returning to their temporary camp one evening, the two doctors noticed a couple of glowworm-like sparks moving about in a tree near at hand, and both pulled up sharply, not sure as to what enemy might be lurking there. When they stopped, the sparks at once became stationary. Then, gradually, by the light of the rising moon, they made out a trim little body, which they recognized as one of the lorises which they often saw by day. As the two men did not move, the animal at length seemed to grow tired of standing still, and ignoring them, began to follow the course in which he had been interrupted along a slender horizontal bough, moving so lightly that not a leaf stirred ; and, but for the gleam of his eyes, the watchers, close as they were, could not have told that he moved at all.

Presently the sparks stood still again, and before the men could count ten, there was a swift rustle as though the monkey had thrust his hand through the leaves to grasp something. This was immediately followed by a succession of despairing squeaks and chirps and fluttering of wings ; then silence again. The little wretch had sneaked up to a sleeping bird, caught it, and had now wrung its neck with the skill of a practised poulterer.



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He then seated himself comfortably on the bough, leered down at the strangers to make sure that they could not reach and rob him, and then proceeded deftly to pluck the little carcass, throwing the feathers broadcast, and pausing now and then to blow them away from him; this done, he crunched up the whole body, bones, head, and all.

The monkeys of the East are, as may be seen from this instance, singularly clever in catching their prey, and even in dealing with arboreal and other enemies. In Further India, Siam, and the Archipelago, it is nothing extraordinary to see these artful creatures worrying a crocodile almost out of his senses, or bundling a huge snake bodily out of a tree. Henri Mouhot, the gallant French explorer, witnessed a curious encounter between a monkey and a poisonous snake some six feet long, the like of which has often been seen by subsequent travellers in Siam.

This snake was lying comfortably coiled in the fork of a tree, asleep, when a monkey—probably one of the gibbons—made a sudden descent from the top branches, and, grasping the reptile's head with one hand and one of the coils of the body with the other, threw it with some force to the ground. Before the astonished snake could collect itself, the assailant was down on the ground beside it, and, keeping his body carefully out of reach of its fangs, had seized it by the head, and, to the explorer's wonderment, began to rub the under side of this vigorously backwards and forwards on the harsh, rocky ground; and this continued, despite the reptile's furious struggles, till the lower jaw and poison-bags were positively ground down to nothing. Other travellers,

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who have seen the same thing in India, have even affirmed that some monkeys will actually go in search of rough flat stone, which they will push under the reptile head for a grindstone before beginning this lively operation.

India offers ample scope to the student of the quadrumania, albeit the stranger who takes up this twig of science there must mind his manners; for in India the monkey is generally a sacred beast, and it is neither courteous nor wise to tamper with Hindu religious susceptibilities. To kill a sacred monkey is to bring a whole village or town round one's ears like a hornet's nest; yet how is one to defend oneself against these creatures?

They often become a positive scourge to a place, and all sorts of expedients have been tried, in order to rid the towns of them. Have we not all heard the tale of the headman, who, goaded beyond human patience, had all the monkeys in his village trapped, driven in a wagon some twenty miles into the country, and turned loose there; and how the impudent creatures, one and all, insisted on accompanying the wagon back to the village, apparently much invigorated by their brief excursion? The Rev. J. G. Wood quotes a funnier and more successful device. An Englishman who had tried every means of keeping these pests from his plantation at last caught several young ones in a net, rubbed them with treacle in which tartar emetic was mixed, and sent them back to their temporarily bereaved parents. The prodigals were duly examined, and, of course, carefully licked by the whole tribe; and probably no schoolboy after his first cigar ever felt worse than those monkeys soon did. At an

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te, they never returned to vex the astute Englishman gain.

Some of these Indian quadrumana scarcely deserve to be included among the smaller monkeys, for, round about Bengal, a creature nearly five feet high is sometimes found, remarkably like the orang-utan in shape and colour. Of this animal the Rev. Charles Acland, once regimental chaplain at Cuttack, gives a curious account.

Mr. Acland, who had been sitting on his verandah reading, had occasion to go into the house to speak to his wife. On returning, he found his chair occupied by one of these big monkeys. There he sat, as comfortable as if the chair belonged to him, the book in his hands—upside down, *bien entendu*—and his eyes closed as though meditating on a passage he had just read. The chaplain's first instinct was to re-enter the house, bolt the window, and leave the enemy in possession; but all of a sudden he remembered that, at the far end of the verandah, separated from him by the intruder, lay his baby asleep in its cot. To have attempted a hand-to-hand struggle with so powerful and agile a brute would have been sheer suicide; and the only way out of the difficulty seemed to be to slip quickly back into the house for a gun, and, whether the natives liked it or no, to put an end to a creature that, in its insane malice, might at any moment snatch the child from its cot and make off with it, even if it did not boldly attack the father.

But just as the chaplain came to this decision, a parrot in a cage over his head gave a loud, angry screech, and instantly the monkey dropped the book and started to

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his feet. At the sight of the young clergyman he showed his teeth, spat, and jabbered, and signified by every possible means that he was working himself up into blind rage.

It was too late to move now. Mr. Acland did, indeed, at first seek to back gently towards the window without taking his eyes off the beast; but when he moved, the intruder moved also, and no sooner did he stand still again than the ape imitated him. Without turning his head he now began to cast his eyes rapidly from side to side in search of a weapon of some sort, but there was nothing more formidable than the parrot's cage and a light bamboo table. In the road there was not a soul in sight, and probably even the Hindu servants were asleep; therefore, to call out would be to alarm his wife to no purpose, and possibly to irritate the brute into extreme measures. Meanwhile, if the child should happen to cry, the ape would most likely turn on it and seize it before the father could run for his rifle.

And so the chaplain stood staring as fiercely as he knew how, hoping to intimidate the brute by a fixed severity of expression, and at the same time revolving in his mind every possible means of killing or driving off the enemy.

Then, like a flash, an idea came to him. Often in the outlying villages he had seen the natives scare off a bear, and even a tiger, by a curious hostile cry or prolonged hoot; this cry had become a sort of catchword among the men in barracks, and having heard it so often there, the chaplain had unconsciously learned to imitate it exactly. He now put it into practice, and with lungs strengthened by excitement, bawled it so

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at it could have been heard at the other end of the town.

The interloper started as though the cry had been aallet, gave a panting, shuddering little moan of fright, rang like a spider over the verandah-rail and on to a nyan-tree outside, from which it escaped to the roof above, and was never seen again.



## CHAPTER XVI

### HUNTING THE ASIATIC ELEPHANT

The elephant of Ceylon.—Prince Waldemar's tour.—An initial disappointment.—A "rogue."—A strange superstition.—Frightened horses.—The cause.—Trying to outrun the elephants.—Desertion of the Sinhalese servants.—A sea of elephants.—A horrible situation.—Major Rogers to the rescue.—An extraordinary feat.—The elephant in Further India and Siam.—Lieutenant White, U.S.N.—A strange method of hunting.—Noise.—A treacherous snare.—"Boxing" the captive elephants.

THE point which most distinguishes this handsome beast from his African brother is the strange concave curve on the top of his head. In disposition, too, he is inclined to be more surly and fierce, on the whole ; such, at any rate, was the opinion of Dr. Hoffmeister, a clever young German scientist who accompanied the late Prince Waldemar of Prussia, as travelling physician, on his tour throughout the Eastern portions of the globe.

It was in Ceylon, near Newara Eliya, that the visitors first came in close contact with the animal ; and here, the Prince tells us, their travels would have come to a terrible close if it had not been for the skill and courage of a British cavalry officer, Major Rogers.

Anxious to see an elephant-hunt without actually bearing a part in it, the invalid Prince, accompanied by

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the doctor and a couple of native attendants, took up his station on horseback on a point of rising ground within the forest, from which he might hope to watch the proceedings.

Meanwhile a dozen English officers on foot, and armed with large-bore rifles, were stalking the game from west to east, and, by the increasingly heavy trampling, it was clear that a considerable herd of elephants was being driven swiftly along towards the spot where the two Germans were waiting.

At last one or two shots sounded quite close at hand, and through the trees the mud-coloured hides could be seen moving rapidly. These soon disappeared, and, after a while, the spasmodic firing ceased and the sound of the elephants' feet died down again.

"Is that all?" asked the Prince disappointedly.

"They have got away from the English sahibs," explained one of the attendants, who could speak English.

"The sahibs are trying to get round them and cut them off in front."

The two travellers remained still for half an hour, patiently waiting for something to happen; but, beyond an occasional shout in the far distance, nothing betokened that anything out of the ordinary was occurring. At last, deciding that the day's sport was ended, the Prince was about to turn his horse's head towards the town, when heavy footsteps came crashing over the leaves and fallen timber fifty yards away.

Every one strained eyes and ears for more certain information.

"That is only one beast," said Dr. Hoffmeister with conviction.

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“Listen ! Perhaps some one is running him down,” said the Prince.

Just then the saplings at the hill-foot parted to make way for a full-grown elephant of great size, which, at sight of the men on horseback, stood rocking himself, pawing the ground, and giving every sign of angry surprise.

“Does he intend charging up this hill, I wonder ?” said the doctor, unslinging a short gun which hung over his shoulder.

An exclamation from one of the natives made him look back at them. He had spoken in German, but both had read his action without understanding the words.

“Do not shoot, sahib,” pleaded the interpreter in English.

The dusky faces of the two attendants had grown grey and leaden with fear, and though each was armed, neither seemed to have any notion or intention of using his weapon.

“We must appear not to notice him,” continued the speaker. “If we were many, we might kill him ; as it is, he would massacre us.”

“But,” argued the doctor, “these English soldiers are only about one man to ten elephants ; why do not *they* get massacred ?”

The Sinhalese looked as contemptuous as a very frightened servant can and dare look, and replied, “The sahib does not understand. This is a ‘rogue.’”

“Oh, it’s a ‘rogue,’ is it ? Well, we don’t want him here,” interposed the Prince ; and at a nod from him the doctor fired off his gun, which was loaded with ball.

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"Ah ; bad shot !" ejaculated Hoffmeister in English, as he saw, to his mortification, that the bullet had passed innocently over the "rogue's" head.

"No ; *good* shot," said the native, bowing respectfully. "He goes ; look !" And certainly the elephant, alarmed by the report, was backing into the path by which he had come, and now, wheeling to the right, hurried away at a dignified trot. "The bad shot would have been had you hit him and not killed him," added the attendant suavely.

A "rogue," or solitary elephant, is regarded by the Hindus and Sinhalese with superstitious horror ; by the Eastern transmigration theory he is the reincarnation of a rebel, and an utterly criminal and undesirable member of society. Be that as it may, a "rogue" elephant is a nasty customer to meet face to face ; in one case out of ten he may turn tail as did Dr. Hoffmeister's, but in the other nine he is far more likely to drag a man from the saddle with his trunk, dash him to the ground, and roll him backwards and forwards between his feet till he has left him senseless or dead.

"We will give them one more quarter of an hour," said the Prince, in reply to a suggestion of the doctor's that his patient might like to be moving on. At the end of that time all rode down the hill again, and, entering upon a narrow forest-road, began to walk their horses along towards Newara Eliya. But as they progressed, they seemed to be coming in touch with the hunt again, for, every now and then, the barking of dogs, and the shouting of voices unmistakably English, rose ahead of them, as though the hunters had established themselves between them and the town.

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On the hill the Prince's horse had shown some signs of fright each time an elephant had come anywhere near, and now he began to jib, and cock his ears nervously, very much as a colt does when he encounters a barrel-organ or a German band for the first time. Prince Waldemar, though no mean rider, was a convalescent, and not in a fit condition to manage a frightened horse; and when, after exhibiting a decided inclination to "buck," the animal shied violently, thus separating himself by several yards from the doctor's horse, the Prince could only with difficulty keep his seat.

Dr. Hoffmeister naturally spurred towards his patient, but before he could reach him his own horse began to grow obstinate, and, at the first sound of an angry trumpeting close at hand, did his best to bolt. One of the natives seized his bridle, and the other hastened to help the Prince; and just then the trumpeting and trampling came nearer than ever.

"We must get past them," shouted the interpreter. "If they come into the road in front of us, we shall all be crushed."

His fellow seized the Prince's bridle, and all four started off at the gallop, uncomfortably conscious that a large elephant-herd was among the trees on their right, still some way ahead, and might at any moment rush into the road, cutting them off from the most direct access to the town.

On went all four sets of hoofs at lightning speed, and at last it seemed as though the riders must be clear of the herd. But as the native let go the Prince's horse, two shots in quick succession sounded just off the road, so close that, though Dr. Hoffmeister could not distinguish



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the shooter among the tree-trunks, he very plainly saw the flash of the second shot.

With a shrill whinny, Prince Waldemar's horse shied again, almost crushing the rider's shin against a tree-trunk by the road-side, and, before Hoffmeister could reach him, three elephants blundered through the brush-wood and low branches a few yards ahead, and, without noticing the riders, rushed blindly across the road, disappearing again in the forest on the other side. This was too much for the Sinhalese ; both lost their heads, and, regardless of their charge, galloped on in the direction of the town.

And now, to make matters worse, Hoffmeister no sooner tried to approach his companion in misfortune than the Prince's horse began to kick viciously, and the doctor's horse following this bad example, it looked very much as if a kicking match would be brought off there and then. Of one thing the Prince's horse was at least determined : not to be caught by the doctor, even if he allowed himself to be restrained by his rider from bolting. Now he began to sidle and dance towards the middle of the road again, till he frightened the doctor's mount out of his wits, and made him decide to unseat his rider on the first possible opportunity.

While affairs were in this encouraging position a fresh stampede, and a fresh and more discordant trumpet-blast, came from the same spot as before, and the rest of the scene seemed to the two Germans simply an exaggerated nightmare. Dusky masses innumerable plunged and rolled from among the trees, and swept past them in an endless procession ; while the two horses charged one another, kicked, screamed, and reared, till

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the riders could only keep their seats by abandoning all effort to do so and trusting entirely to luck.

As to the procession that crossed their path, it seemed as though all the elephants in Asia had collected with the set purpose of parading before the august traveller. In reality there were about a hundred, but imagination made a vast ocean of them.

At last it came to an end, and, as Prince Waldemar's horse gathered his legs under him for a frantic spring forward, the doctor managed to catch the bridle, and so draw the two heads close together, with the view of making both animals go forward at a sober speed. But still the shouting and occasional gun-reports on their right continued.

"Let us get on quickly now," panted the invalid.  
"There are more to come, you can hear."

As he spoke, two more elephants charged into the road, caught sight of the horses, reduced their run to a walk, and, sniffing suspiciously, wheeled towards the hapless riders.

The Prince was unarmed; the doctor had not reloaded his gun, and in any case it would have been useless now that all his energies, and both his hands, were employed with the horses.

"Can Your Highness guide him past them if I let go?" he had started to say, when a grey-clad, white-helmeted figure seemed to leap from nowhere, and Major Rogers, one of the shooting-party, sprang between the two elephants. Then, before either rider could imagine what was about to happen, the cool-headed soldier had fired off one barrel of his gun at the ear of the left-hand elephant, who dropped on his knees, then fell sideways with a



### IN THE NICK OF TIME

Prince Waldemar, who was travelling for his health in Ceylon, wished to see an elephant hunt. His curiosity was more than satisfied, for two huge animals blocked his path, and his horse was uncontrollable from terror. Matters were extremely critical, when an English officer calmly stepped out of the bush between the two elephants and coolly shot them one after the other.



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horrible crash. The second elephant started and stopped, and, while he was making up his mind what to do next, the Englishman had served him in the same way as his kinsman ; and the animal rocked, bellowed, and fell dead almost at the very feet of the frightened horses.

Lieutenant John White, of the United States Navy, saw elephant-hunting carried on in a very different manner while he was travelling through Siam and Further India. Several times he assisted at native hunts, but the idea was business, not sport, and catching instead of killing ; for it scarcely need be said that the South Asiatic farmer, contractor, timber-merchant, and trader used, till lately, to rely as much on the strength of the domesticated elephant as we do on steam or electricity. When an elephant can build a stone wall all by himself, can plough a field as well as a dozen oxen, or carry barks of timber that ten men could scarcely move, he becomes a valuable item in the economy of labour.

On one occasion Mr. White met a group of Siamese peasants armed not only with guns and little explosive balls, but with drums, bells, tin kettles, horns, and everything else calculated to make a diabolical commotion ; and, finding that they were going elephant-hunting, he speedily decided to accompany them. Falling in, then, with this very large and very noisy army, he entered a thick forest of teak and oak. Before the hunters had penetrated this above half a mile, the leader called a halt, enjoined silence and caution on everybody, and proceeded to marshal his men, so that, within an hour or two, they had formed an immense curved line, which bade fair soon to reach several miles in extent.



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Each hunter went about his business in perfect silence but White observed that the men nearest to him all had their guns or drums, or other instruments of torture, in almost nervous readiness, as though impatient for an expected signal to begin the music.

At length this signal came—four gun-discharges in rapid succession. At the fourth shot the forest became positively alive with uproar ; even a civilized mob could scarcely have made more noise ; and, as though the clatter and tumult were not enough in themselves, they were quickly augmented by the hollow trumpeting of probably about two hundred terrified elephants.

Mr. White's guide beckoned to him to follow him as he stepped hurriedly forward, and it was soon apparent that this enormous human circle was closing in towards a common centre. The racket continued, and after a while the American could see almost a score of elephants ahead of him, plunging and charging towards some distant point. This kind of thing went on for nearly an hour, and at last the traveller came in sight of the centre for which he and his companions had been aiming. At first this seemed to be a trim and very regular avenue of trees, up which scores of elephants were trotting contentedly under the leadership of an old female ; but as White drew nearer to it he saw that it was the treacherous entry to an immense trap, *keddah* or *corral*, and that the suburban-like avenue was simply a cunning and orderly arrangement of saplings and cut branches, placed there so as half to conceal the strong fence of stakes on either edge of the road. The noise on every side of the herd had gradually frightened them towards this entry, which looked like a convenient way of escape, and, to the animals' discomfi-

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re, turned out to be merely a channel into a snare from which there was no possible egress.

As soon as the last of the captives was safely inside the avenue, the whole multitude of hunters sprang from their concealment and ran hooting and bellowing down the channel, thereby hastening the speed with which the elephants reached the larger enclosure. At the opening of this were strong sliding-gates, which were rapidly closed, and through the interstices of which Mr. White could see the half-bewildered elephants pausing and looking round with some anxiety for their invisible pursuers.

"Now we have to separate them," said his guide, adding a courteous invitation to "come and see." They clamoured over one of the avenue-fences and came into the open again, outside the greater enclosure, and now White could see that each of the sides of the large quadrangle was divided off into dozens of horsebox-like compartments, too narrow for an elephant to turn in, and not much more than long enough to admit the body of a full-grown animal. At that end of each box which was nearer to the outer fence a large heap of tempting delicacies was placed—sugar-canes, juicy bamboo-tops, fruit, and leaves; at the other end was a door which could instantly be shut as soon as the "bird" was caged.

For the "caging" process a dozen active and experienced men were told off, and these, climbing over the high fence into the enclosure, and deftly dodging the gentle attentions of any elephant that was disposed to be quarrelsome, succeeded in a very short time in boxing up every individual in a separate cell. The prisoners, Mr. White was informed, would soon be petted or starved or coaxed into a semblance of good behaviour. For those

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that were minded to kick, a very effectual punishment lay ready to hand—that of running a pole between the legs, longitudinally with the body. After a few weeks they would be removed one by one, in order of merit and docility, to more comfortable quarters, where, after a period of about five months, they would have learned to bear their human or other burdens.

## CHAPTER XVII

### TAPIR AND RHINOCEROS HUNTING

the hyrax, the tapir, and the rhinoceros.—Mr. Elliott's attempt to catch a hyrax.—A plucky little beast.—The tapir a prehistoric animal.—The Asiatic variety.—M. Benant's adventure.—Trying to catch a baby tapir.—Reckoning without the mother.—Flight.—Tapir *versus* Malay.—A timely shot.—The Asiatic rhinoceros.—A cowardly variety.—Roasting the Sumatran rhinoceros.—Another adventure of John White's.—The danger of possessing a lame horse.—An angry rhinoceros.—Pursued and overtaken.—A narrow escape.—Death of the horse.—And of the rhinoceros.

MORE or less intimately connected with the elephant are the rhinoceros, the tapir, and a remarkable little creature of which very little seems to be known—the hyrax. Each of these animals has a representative in either the South or the West, but here we shall discuss only those specimens which are found in the Eastern portion of the earth.

At first glance the hyrax would seem to have no more in common with the elephant than we have, for he is a soft-coated little thing, scarcely the size of a hare; yet the modern zoologists, following in the wake of Cuvier, tell us that he undoubtedly is very nearly related to the rhinoceros, etc. The Eastern variety of hyrax is found in Syria and round about the Red Sea, and most probably is the "coney" frequently mentioned in Holy Scripture.

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Mr. C. B. Elliott, the traveller in Palestine, occasionally came across families of these little things, burrowing in the hills or among the ruins of ancient Eastern cities, and not unnaturally mistook them for a kind of earless or short-eared rabbit.

Once—and only once—he endeavoured to catch one. He ran him down from the mouth of a burrow into a narrow defile, which, curving round the foot of a hill, came to an abrupt end two hundred yards farther on at the bottom of a low precipice. Mr. Elliott hailed this precipice with delight, for he was bound now to have the hyrax in a *cul-de-sac*, unless the little thing tried to scale one of the two steep banks on either side of the pass, and this was very improbable.

Finding at length that he had come to the end of his tether, the fugitive did not turn to bay as most hunted beasts would do, but, with his back turned to his pursuer, hopped from right to left, now and then pushing his nose under a huge stone, as though hoping to find shelter there. His would-be captor stood watching him three feet away, expecting every moment that the creature would at least turn and endeavour to dodge between his legs. But the “coney” still gave no other sign of knowing that he was “wanted” than before; and, tired of watching these evolutions, Mr. Elliott made a grab at him.

But he had not allowed for the animal’s possessing quite an elephantine sense of smell; as he stretched out his hand, the little head suddenly turned, the hyrax made a sideward spring, and bit his thumb to the bone.

Mr. Elliott was neither a veterinary surgeon nor a game-keeper, and did not know how to collar a vicious animal; he was, moreover, short-tempered, which a hunter of wild



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beasts has no right to be ; and, carried away by his feelings, he snatched his hand free again, and aimed an angry kick at the offender. In an instant the formidable teeth were through his trousers, into his calf and out again, kicking, rather than tearing, the flesh painfully.

Ready now to laugh at himself for being frightened or outwitted by such a contemptible foe, he stooped over the animal, but was soon glad to spring erect again ; for the hyrax immediately raised his head with the obvious intention of driving his powerful little teeth through the nose or chin of his opponent. Foiled in this benevolent attempt, the hyrax still showed no sign of turning to flee, but stood looking, half inquisitively, half defiantly, at the disturber of his peace. Mr. Elliott grew to like the position less and less, and at length drew several paces back, and the victorious animal, seeing a way of escape, suddenly darted between the explorer's feet and scuttled back towards his burrow.

The tapir, as may be seen from a glance at a portrait of him, is closely related to the elephant, the pig, and the horse, and, next to the hyrax, is to zoologists the most interesting of the group ; for, like the marsupials, he seems almost to have no business on the earth nowadays. He is prehistoric, and absurdly out of date—behind the times altogether, in fact. If, having the elephant, we can dispense with the services of the mastodon or the mammoth, we could equally do without the tapir, now that we have got used to a revised edition of him in the horse.

The truth is that, where natural man is concerned, we often find a sort of implied treaty with those of the lower animals that are not required for food, personal adorn-

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ment, or domestic use, and that do not avowedly threaten the lives or the interests of the human race. Among the few beasts that come within this narrow category is the tapir, and to him man has tacitly said for countless centuries : " Leave me alone, and I'll leave you alone ; and when I want thongs I'll cut them out of rhinoceros- or cow-hide, as long as you behave yourself." Thus, while his early contemporaries are only known to the geologist, the tapir himself still lives on, for he has generally kept to the conditions of the contract.

The Asiatic variety is to be found round about the Malayan district, and is distinguished from the Western species by having a longer proboscis, and by the possession of a large white patch that extends over the beast from saddle to rump. The markings of the young, however, are very different, the little things being covered with an orderly arrangement of light-coloured spots and bars which, thrown into relief by the black ground of their hides, are very ornamental.

The desire to possess one of these Malayan baby-tapirs, for exhibition purposes, once brought M. Benant, a French museum curator, into very serious trouble. M. Benant, accompanied by a native guide, was searching for botanical and zoological treasures in the swamps of Malacca, when an old female tapir and her young one came suddenly into view from the other side of a fringe of bushes hard by. They were, no doubt, in search of mud wherewith to coat themselves against the stings of the flies and scorpions, for at sight of the swamp both plunged eagerly forward towards the water and slime that lay at their feet. But scarcely had the mud touched her when the mother raised her head, sniffed the air sharply as though conscious of

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presence of trespassers, and at length turned her eyes to the two men who were but ill-concealed behind a tree. The Frenchman was armed with a single-barrelled gun, and the Malay with a spear and a heavy native knife, or kris.

"I shall shoot her and capture the little one," whispered Benant, as he raised his gun. But his marksmanship was not equal to his scientific lore; the bullet missed the mother, and lodged in the neck of the little one just as she was trying to persuade it to move to the far side of the river.

Generally the tapir is the gentlest and timidest of beasts, so that even a human mother would not see her offspring slaughtered without protest. With a roar of vengeance, the old tapir charged with incredible speed towards the mother, and M. Benant frankly took to his heels. The native hurled his spear at the charging beast, and, seeing that it glanced off her shoulder, inflicting but a skin wound, she flung hand and foot to the tree, hoping to climb out of reach before she could get at him. But it was too late; the trunk was very large, and offered no more foothold than a blank wall. In despair the Malay made a tremendous upward spring, hoping to reach a branch with his fingers, and so draw himself into safety.

Meanwhile, out of breath and half ashamed of himself, Benant had halted behind a tree fifty yards or more from the swamp. As he looked round, the Malay was making frantic efforts to reach the branch; his heels were nearly three feet above the ground, and he was hanging on by the tips of his fingers. But before he could get a surer hold, the tapir had reached him in full gallop; her proboscis struck his calves violently, causing him first to

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swing like a gigantic pendulum, and then to lose his g altogether, and fall half stunned to the ground.

In France M. Benant had seen a prostrate dog maul by a wild-boar, and the tapir's next proceeding was horrible reminder of that experience ; for she gripped the Malay between her forefeet, battered his body with her snout, and at last, opening her mouth, seized his hip with her powerful jaws. The pain seemed to rouse the native to his senses again, for with a stupendous effort he wrenched his *kris* free from his girdle.

Shivering to think of how little use this unwieldy weapon would be at such close quarters, the Frenchman threw aside his fears, reloaded his gun, and ran back to the fray almost as hard as he had run from it. And not too soon for at sight of the moving arm of the Malay the tapir leapt to go his hip and seized him by the elbow so fiercely that he screamed out with the pain. Reckless now of his own safety, and conscious of the uncertainty of his aim, the impetuous Frenchman did not stop till the muzzle of his gun almost touched the furious animal's eye ; then he fired, and seldom has a tapir been killed at so close a range. M. Benant thus got two dead animals instead of one living one, and saddled himself with a heavy surgeon's bill for his guide.

When an artist wishes to paint a rhinoceros, it may be noticed in nine cases out of ten that he chooses a particular variety for his subject, and the result is that most of us have grown up in the belief that the rhinoceros is a beast that wears a skin at least three sizes too large for him. Now, this is to paint the evil one blacker than he is ; for, when we come to the facts, the skin of the animal is not at all a bad fit, excepting that of





### AN INFURIATED MOTHER

The tapir is credited with an amiable and gentle disposition, but when M. Benant shot a young one the mother charged furiously. The zoologist took to his heels, and his Malay servant tried to climb a tree, but the brute was upon him before he succeeded, and knocked him down and mauled him badly before M. Benant shot it.





## TAPIR AND RHINOCEROS HUNTING

the Indian species, which certainly does lie in generous holds.

If "handsome is as handsome does" be not always true, the opposite is certainly the case where the rhinoceros is concerned, no matter whether he hails from Africa, India, or the Eastern Archipelago; and if the elephant be the gentleman of the forest, his relative is the ill-bred curmudgeon who shambles his heavy-footed way through life quite regardless of the feelings of anyone but himself. Some varieties add to this the vice of cowardice. Two or three times M. Benant and his friend Windsor Earl tried to shoot the Sumatran rhinoceros, and on each occasion he ran away from them, not even turning when he was hit; and it is even said that this species will flee from a good-sized dog. This is all the more curious in that he is generally of solitary habits, and it is when alone that most wild beasts are disposed to be aggressive.

This particular kind is fonder than most of his family of wallowing in the mud, a propensity which sometimes brings him to an untimely end at the hands of the Malays. Often by the close of the wet season the rhinoceros has encased himself in a small mountain of clay, and, as this hardens, the creature can only hope to free himself from this unpleasant coat of mail by the wear and tear of time. While he is thus hampered, a group of Malays will follow his slow movements, wait till he falls asleep, and then, with the atrocious cruelty of their race, will hem him in on all sides with rice-straw and dry wood, to which they set light; flaming brands and faggots are then thrown on him till he is completely buried in a huge fire, and so is cooked, just as our gipsies at home roast a hedgehog,

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clay and skin coming off together when the roast is "done."

The rhinoceros of Cochin China is especially fleet of foot, and is no less fierce than the African animal. When to excessive speed you add enormous strength and a horn long enough and sharp enough to go straight through the body of a horse and pierce a man on the other side, you have one of the most dangerous antagonists that the earth affords ; and it is not to be wondered at that twentieth-century sportsmen have ground for complaint of the prevailing scarcity of these unpleasing animals.

But when Lieutenant White, U.S.N., whose elephant-trapping experiences have been related, was travelling through Cochin China in the forties, the hunter had not far to look for game of this sort ; often it came to hand before he was ready, as once happened to Mr. White. His horse had suddenly gone lame, and Mr. White, who had thus been obliged to fall out from a boar-chase in which he had been engaged with some other travellers, was walking the animal back to the village from which he had started. On emerging from the forest, he came on to a wide stretch of grass-ground, skirted by a cane-plantation, and dotted over with large, wide-spreading bushes.

Soon he noticed that one of these bushes, which lay on his right front, was moving in a most unaccountable fashion ; there was little wind, yet the bush rocked and heaved as though a storm were tearing at it. Curious as to this phenomenon, the American touched his off-bridle with the intention of approaching the spot ; but, instead of obeying, the horse suddenly stood stock still, a tremor passing through the whole of his body. White used the

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our very gently ; the horse snorted, but would not stir, and, on his bridle being jerked sharply, broke out into a frightened neigh, and the rider could see the sweat start from the terrified beast's withers. Willing to humour him, he pulled the other rein, and, seemingly delighted at this concession, the animal started forward at a brisk canter, quite forgetful of his lameness.

Thus they came abreast of the moving bush about thirty yards away from it, and White half reined up, and turned to look at the cause of the mysterious motion. What he saw was a single-horned rhinoceros, presumably insane with rage, goring and tearing and tossing the innocent bush till there promised to be very little of it left by the time his anger was appeased. Badly mounted as he was, the sailor had no desire for closer acquaintance with such a companion ; so, as the horse seemed to have got the better of his lameness, he let him choose his own pace, and they moved on again at a smart trot. But now, either what little wind there was changed, and so carried the scent towards the rhinoceros, or else that furious beast heard the sound of the departing hoofs ; for suddenly the lieutenant was conscious of a vibration of the ground, and, turning his head, saw that the rhinoceros, evidently aware that any two sides of a triangle are together greater than the third side, was coming in a straight line towards the beginning of the road which the hunted man was hoping to reach—and at such a rate that only at full gallop could a horse outrun him.

No longer hesitating about using the spur, he worked the horse up to the top of his speed ; but it was like turning up the wick of an exhausted lamp : the gallop endured for a bare minute, then the poor brute stumbled, slowed,

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and, sweating at every pore, settled down to a despairing hobble, yet pricking up his ears and panting as the sound of the lumbering footsteps drew nearer. White had now rather more than half a minute in which to make up his mind as to his course. His gun, loaded in both barrels, was slung across his shoulder ; but, though he was far better in the saddle than the majority of sailors, as well as a remarkably good shot, he had had but little experience in firing from horseback, and was too much a man of the world to risk experiments at such a time.

One of two things he must certainly do, and that quickly : either turn the horse adrift, and rely for his salvation on his own legs and aim, or else face his pursuer, wait for his charge, and dodge it, repeating the manœuvre till the enemy tired down or gave up the game. Consideration for the horse led him to the second decision, and, disregarding his beast's fright, he swung him round on his haunches, and, standing up in the stirrups, awaited the rush of the rhinoceros.

It came quite soon enough, and it was only by a short twelve inches that he avoided it. But the savage monster was able to pull up and turn much more quickly than the rider had allowed for ; and he had scarcely swung his horse round a second time before the rhinoceros was on him again. This time the horse, soaking with perspiration and lather, and fascinated by fear, could not or would not move. In vain the lieutenant drove the spur-rowels in, and in his frenzy of excitement struck the creature with his clenched fist across the crest. The poor wretch stood quivering till the horrible horn was within an inch of his chest ; then, too late, he rose, shrieking, on to his haunches ; there was a ghastly, sickening concussion, and White,



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Knowing too well what had happened, kicked his feet free of the stirrups, and slid to the ground in a sitting position, the poor horse's death-scream ringing in his ears the while. Stiff and aching, he struggled to his feet and snatched his gun, just as the rhinoceros disengaged his horn from the belly of the dead beast.

"I'll make you pay for this," gasped the young sailor, ready in his fury to fight the murderer hand to hand if need were. His arm shook with rage as he took aim, but the ball nevertheless did all that was required of it; it caught the rhinoceros under the shoulder, piercing the skin just where it was tenderest, and the animal dropped on his knees, bellowing and foaming at the mouth, and while the American was still debating as to whether a second shot was called for, the brute rolled over dead.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### ADVENTURES AMONG TIGERS

The home of the tiger.—Hindrances to his extermination.—A popular error concerning him.—His boldness.—Major McCarthy and the Rev. C. Acland.—A tiger in the grass.—“Stole away.”—An awful moment.—Seized and carried off by the tiger.—Shooting in vain.—How the Major saved himself.—A not unpleasant method of locomotion.—The Chinaman’s notion of hunting.—A tigress caught in a net.—Dog diet for the captive.—Strange affection between a tigress and a puppy.—The tigress taken aboard ship.—Outram as a tiger-hunter.—An extraordinary snare.—Some canny Hindus.—Hunting the beast in the hills.—Stalking.—The tiger “earthed.”—The hunters “treed.”—Outram’s magnificent courage.

THE geographical sphere of the tiger is comparatively small, and if most of us had our way it would soon be a good deal smaller; for brutes that, in the course of a twelve-month, devour twelve hundred human beings and over sixty thousand head of cattle in the British Indian Provinces alone\* form a branch of the mammalia that might well be lopped off.

The tiger is quite confined to the continent of Asia, but we have no right to suppose that a hot climate is necessary to his well-being; for he is often found high up in the mountains, and Professor Thomson tells us that he “ranges from the hot Malayan jungle to the icy

\* The figures are those of Mr. J. A. Baines, C.S.I., published in 1899.

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iberian tundras." These northern animals are, however, supplied with a longer and more furry coat than the Bengal tiger.

In spite of the alarming figures quoted above, the Indian tiger is undeniably on the decrease—at least, wherever British sportsmen have penetrated; but we have seen in Chapter XV. that Eastern religious bias is a thing to be taken into account where the destruction of wild beasts is concerned; and as long as there are pious rajahs who, claiming descent from the gods, will not permit the slaughter of tigers and other animals, so long will these creatures continue to be a plague to mankind and his property. Also, the native populations in many parts are timid, and so fear to attempt the slaughter of such a terrible foe. Had all India been peopled with redskins, or even with some of the negro tribes, the beast might have been annihilated long ago.

But, to give even the tiger his due, there is one popular error concerning him that should be corrected. Many people still believe that he kills for the mere lust of killing, whether he is hungry or not. This is totally untrue, as well as contrary to Nature. But the mistake has arisen from grounds that have made such a belief to some extent excusable. Travellers have seen a tiger bring down a sambûr or an ox, eat only a small portion of the carcass, and then disappear. But that tiger had every intention of coming back to finish his meal. Again, he has been accused of blood-thirstiness, on the score of his having been known to slay first the sheep and then the shepherd. If the shepherd had left him alone, he would probably not have been hurt; in killing him, the tiger was either making sure of his meal, or was indulging in his equivalent to the

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“swearing ” which you may hear from the most respectable household cat if you threaten to take a mouse away from her.

One point in his nature which should surely command our admiration is that he is seldom a coward. It might be argued that he has no need to be ; but that is not quite true, for, besides man, he has formidable enemies among the reptiles, and in the bear, the wolf, the buffalo, and the orang-utan. Yet, for boldness he has no equal among the brutes ; and if a lion, or even a hyæna, will carry off a defenceless and solitary man, a hungry tiger will sometimes rush fearlessly into a crowd of men and seize one of their number in spite of shouts and shots.

The Rev. Charles Acland, the military chaplain already mentioned, gives a good instance of this audacity on the part of the Bengal tiger ; and he shows at the same time how, in a contest between man and beast, man’s quicker wit and greater power of will and resource may decide the day in his favour, no matter how heavy the odds against him may seem to be. Mr. Acland was bear-hunting with a brother officer, Major McCarthy, and, finding sport slack and their appetites sharpened, the two men had sat down under the shade of a high bank, and proceeded to attack the luncheon-basket which their coolies had brought them. They were in the middle of their repast, when one of the coolies came running up again to say that he had seen a tiger stretching himself in the long grass farther down the road. The chaplain jumped up and took his gun, but the Major preferred to finish his meal in comfort.

“ Humbug ! ” he said. “ Don’t go, Acland ; these fellows will tell any lie to curry favour. There hasn’t

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en a tiger seen for weeks. Oh, all right ; go, if you're  
ent on it ; I shall catch you up presently."

The clergyman accordingly followed the coolie over the  
bank and across some fifty yards of broken ground, to  
the edge of a patch of jungle. The native had not lied,  
for there, sure enough, was the little path made by the  
passing of the animal's body ; and Mr. Acland paused,  
hesitantly deciding to go no farther till McCarthy and the  
rest of the coolies should arrive. He was straining his  
eyes over the surface of the long grass to detect any sign  
of movement, when the native uttered a low-voiced  
exclamation and pointed dramatically to his far left.  
Acland turned hastily and saw that, thirty yards away,  
the grass was waving gently in such a manner as  
could only be caused by the progress of some large  
body.

"We shall lose him altogether at this rate," he said  
uneasily. But the native pointed out that the moving  
body was following a distinctly curved line which, if  
persisted in, would bring it into the open, close by the  
high bank, a hundred yards or so lower down the road  
than where the two officers had been resting.

"There ; the heaven-born will see that I was right !"   
said the coolie, as he pointed triumphantly towards the  
bank on their left. A magnificent tiger, ten feet long,  
was calmly stalking out from the grass, and, not deigning  
to notice the two men, sprang lightly over the bank and  
disappeared in the road below.

"Come along ; the Major shan't have it all to himself,"  
said the chaplain ; and both started running along a  
diagonal path which should land them about midway  
between the spot where the tiger had disappeared and



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that at which they had left the Major. In a minute or two they had reached the bank, and, holding his gun in readiness, Acland cautiously climbed up the slope, from the top of which he would have a good view of the road either way.

More used to such work, the native arrived on the ridge first, but had no sooner gained it than, covering his face with his hands, he fell back screaming hysterically. With a swift spring the chaplain arrived at the top of the bank, and stood there for a moment with his eyes starting out of his head from horror. Then, raising his voice to a shriek, he cried, "*McCarthy! McCarthy! O God!*" and for a moment it seemed as if he, too, would fall headlong down the bank.

A hundred yards away, the remaining coolies were running like frightened deer; Major McCarthy was stretching himself in a half-recumbent position, evidently just rousing from a nap; and within a few paces of him was the tiger.

With a wild shout to the horror-stricken coolie, Acland leapt into the road, and, not daring to trust his nerve for a long shot, was setting off at full speed, when the tiger made one spring, and instantly his teeth were in McCarthy's leg, and the bewildered man, now for the first time conscious of the brute's presence, was lying half slung over his captor's neck.

The terrified coolie had come to his senses again, and, once more clambering over the bank, was keeping pace with the chaplain, who was running and shouting like a madman. At the rate at which they were pursuing, they must soon catch the tiger; for he was trotting along contentedly with his burden at hardly more than a



### AN EXCITING EXPERIENCE

The tiger seized Major McCarthy by the leg, and swung him over its back. His horrified friend fired, but missed the animal and grazed the Major's arm. There was then a sound of three shots in quick succession, and the tiger rolled over dead; the Major had succeeded in drawing his revolver and had shot it in the head.



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an's swift walking step. Within forty yards Acland rolled up, levelled his gun, and fired. Certainly the animal looked round ; but if hit, he did not change his pace.

"Shoot, shoot, shoot ! Better kill *him* than——" screamed the chaplain, as he pushed another cartridge to his breech ; and the coolie fired, with no better success than his master.

Acland had his finger on the trigger a second time, and was straining every nerve for a more certain aim, when the sun-rays flashed on something bright that the Major held in his hand. Then there sounded pop-pop-pop—three cracks of a revolver ; and the tiger fell without a roar, as McCarthy, with a powerful jerk of his body, sprang clear of the terrible jaws. Another moment, and they would have locked on him like the teeth of a spring-trap.

The soldier struggled to his feet, and limped cheerily to meet his friend. "It's all right ; I'm not hurt," he cried, and hastily gave some directions to the coolie, relative to skinning the beast ; for, under an Indian sun, putrefaction begins to set in almost immediately after death, rendering a skin worthless unless it is removed at once.

"Not hurt ?" ejaculated the clergyman. "Where's *that* come from, then ?" and he pointed to the Major's left hand, down which blood was running in streams.

"Who fired that first shot ?" inquired McCarthy.

"I did."

"Thanks, old chap," said the Major, pulling up his sleeve, and, to Acland's horror, showing a slight bullet-wound in the fleshy part of the forearm.

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"After both of you had had a try, I thought it was my turn to begin," he said, laughingly cutting short his friend's apologies. "I never travel without this;" he returned the revolver to his hip-pocket. "I couldn't get at it at first; indeed, I don't know that I wanted to at the start. Most comfortable sensation, being carried along by a tiger, I assure you. Try it. But this one was a poor hand at man-catching; kindly offered me his ear as a mark. I couldn't help killing him."

It should be explained that men who have been carried off by a lion or tiger, and have yet lived to talk about it, all agree that the preliminary shake, which these wild beasts give to the living prey that they have seized, acts as a distinct sedative; and that, so far from consciousness of pain, they have experienced quite a soothing sensation. Most of us will be quite ready to take their word for it.

If the Asiatics are loath to attack the tiger boldly, many of them are very clever at trapping him. Some take a middle course, or a mixture of trapping and hunting. Lieutenant White one day came across an enterprising Chinaman who was snugly encased in the cage which White had supposed to be intended for a tiger, while that beast himself lay dead outside. The "cage" was really a fortress made cunningly of stout bamboo poles; the man entrenched himself therein to act as combined bait and executioner, and, by imitating the cry of a goat, soon attracted a hungry tiger which the Chinaman had been able to shoot at his leisure during his frantic efforts to get at the tempting morsel behind the bars.

One would as soon think of finding affection in a boa-constrictor as in a tiger; yet almost every work on



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Natural history gives instances of tigers that had more than a mere cupboard-love for their keepers, and were even on friendly terms with beasts of a different family. Naturally the tigress is affectionate towards her little ones (by the way, she conceals them from her mate just as the lioness does, and for the same gruesome reason : that the father should not be tempted to make a meal of them) ; but Mr. White, while waiting in Saigon for his ship to take him up, witnessed a singular instance of affection between a tigress and a puppy.

A magnificent "royal" tigress had been captured outside the town in a trap that was scarcely remarkable for its ingenuity, seeing that it was merely a thick bag-net, the meshes of which the animal might, if left alone long enough, bite or tear through, even if she did not walk off with it bodily. However, she was firmly secured, dragged into the town, placed in a strong iron cage, and exposed to public view. The question naturally arose in White's head, What was she going to be fed on ? But this problem presented no difficulty to the native mind ; dogs are plentiful enough—a public nuisance, in fact—in the East.

On dog diet, then, she was put, and every day two or three of the wretched animals were hustled into the cage. With each shrinking victim, no matter how large, the tigress played as a cat does with a mouse, and ended by making a meal of him. But, on the fourth day of her captivity, some evil-disposed person thrust a six-months old pup through the bars, and madame, of course, swooped down on it. But, to every one's surprise, her own included, the pup, on finding himself between her forepaws, gave a vicious yap, and, springing up, drove his little

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teeth into the tigress's nose. There was a "sensation" in the crowd ; and it swelled to a cheer when the monster stooped her head and began to lick and fondle the little thing as if it had been her own baby. From that time forth she allowed the pup to come and go as he pleased ; whenever he visited her she licked and caressed him, and seemed disconsolate when he left her at evening. Once or twice a similar pup was substituted for her favourite by the keeper ; but the tigress was not to be duped, and each time unhesitatingly devoured the impostor.

When White's Captain came ashore, he and the other officers "clubbed" to buy the tigress, and she was taken on board ; but long before the ship reached San Francisco she quarrelled with her pet, and he had to be kept out of her way ; and, as food-supplies were running low, the Captain was eventually obliged to shoot her for fear she should starve.

To go back to the subject of trapping, George Vigne, the explorer, while in the North of India, came across a really brilliant method of catching tigers, which is said still to be in use. He was staying with General (then Captain) Outram, and both were seated in an elephant howdah on the way to a tiger hunt, when the elephant stopped short and absolutely refused to proceed. At the same time roars of anger and pain came from a most extraordinary-looking object that was rolling and writhing under a tree a little way ahead.

"Hullo ! A tiger," said Captain Outram.

"Doesn't look much like one," commented Vigne.

"Come down and see ; he can't hurt you."

The elephant was persuaded to "duck," and both

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Englishmen, taking their guns, walked towards what looked like a moving and very noisy compost-heap. At closer quarters Vigne saw that this object was a tiger, crouched from head to foot with leaves. The animal, taking no notice of their presence—he certainly could not have seen them—was tearing up the earth with his claws, pausing now and then to run a few steps backwards like a blind-folded cat. Outram raised his gun, and with one shot put an end to these miserable struggles.

The canny Hindus had spread the ground with large leaves, smeared with bird-lime or some other sticky substance ; and the tiger, taking his walks abroad, naturally had not gone far before one of the leaves adhered to his paw. In trying to rub it off he had gathered more ; then he had brought his mouth into action, and accordingly smeared that and his eyes ; half blinded, he had rolled over and over furiously, gathering more and more leaves, until at length, helplessly entangled, he had given way to despairing rage, unable to see, and therefore to protect himself. But for Captain Outram's gun, he might have gone on making bad worse, till the natives who were in hiding chose to come and put him out of his misery.

Outram's reputation as a slayer of tigers is still proverbial in India. Mr. Vigne says of him : " He seldom went tiger-hunting without incurring risks ; I have known him kill two tigers in twenty minutes." But if the great soldier carried daring to the verge of foolhardiness in his sports, he was also ready, at need, to save a fellow-man's life at the risk of his own, by the exercise of his splendid courage.

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He, Vigne, and a young Lieutenant of Outram's regiment, one day went tiger-hunting on foot in the mountains. After half an hour's climbing they came upon the footprints of the animal they sought, and, stalking him cautiously, at last came in sight of him looking down at them from a well-wooded platform some distance higher. Vigne fired and missed, and the tiger took to his heels. But the three men lost no time in scrambling up to the level, and arrived there just soon enough to see the animal's tail disappear among the trees. Spurred by the excitement of the moment, they gave chase, and at length came in sight of the fugitive again. He was running at a slightly less rapid pace than theirs, and did not increase it when conscious of their presence.

"Woa! Slow up," whispered Outram. "He's going for that little cavern, I believe."

The Captain was right; the tiger bolted straight into a cave with an opening about fifteen feet each way, and not very deep, judging from the fact that, once inside, he turned immediately, and the hunters could see his eyes flashing greenly in the darkness.

"Up!" said Outram, with a gesture; and he and the subaltern swung themselves into one tree, while Vigne climbed another a little farther off.

"We shall get him if we have patience," said the Captain in a loud whisper. "Don't make a sound."

Dead silence under such circumstances is apt to play havoc with the nerves, and after half an hour of it Vigne felt the strain getting the better of him. He peered anxiously down towards the cave-mouth, determining that he would shoot there and then, if only he could catch sight of the flaming eyes within; but it goes without



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ying that, from the height at which he was situated, it was impossible to get at the animal.

"Why not fire, and so fetch him out?" he whispered at last, unable to endure the tension any longer.

"Keep quiet, can't you? He'll come out fast enough soon as he's hungry," came the answering and not altogether comforting whisper.

Vigne had no watch on, so he began to count the seconds, and had reached about six hundred, when there came a sudden noise that turned him sick with horror: the sharp, sinister crack of a breaking bough. The young lieutenant had chosen a branch that had a flaw in it, and now, without the least warning, it had snapped off like a bit of sealing-wax; the poor boy fell heavily to the ground, and lay there quite unconscious, less than fifteen feet from the mouth of the cave.

Vigne thrust his head through the leaves to consult his friend by a look, and at the same moment an ominous growl and stir came from the cave. He saw Outram unloading his gun; then, apparently thinking better of it, he put it back again, and without a moment's hesitation began resolutely to swing himself to the ground.

"Come back; you must be mad," gasped Vigne.

The moment his feet touched the ground the Captain had his gun in his hand again, and, in a couple of strides, he was standing over the prostrate lad with the muzzle pointing at the cave. Vigne pulled himself together.

"I'll back you up," he cried, and prepared to descend. But at his shout the hidden tiger uttered an angry snarl, and Vigne felt instinctively that the beast was springing. He was right; for a second, a blurred yellow mass seemed to hang in mid air, and, while it was still there, both barrels



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of Outram's gun went off, each sending a bullet into the chest of the tiger. The beast was dead before he could fall, but the momentum of his spring carried him well forward, so that the whole of his four hundredweight missed but a few inches of falling on the body of the now reviving subaltern.

## CHAPTER XIX

### HUNTING WILD BEASTS OF THE EASTERN MOUNTAINS

Different homes chosen by wild beasts.—The ibex, the argali, and the kiang.—Pursuing an ibex.—Worse than chamois-hunting.—A terrible abyss.—A perilous climb.—The retreat of the ibex.—Method of the animal's flight.—A twenty-five foot leap.—The argali, or mountain-sheep.—A ram as big as a bull.—An extraordinary fight.—Subsequent conduct of the victor.—An awkward position for flight.—The wild ass, or kiang.—Sir James Abbott.—Friendly Turcomans.—A kiang-hunt.—Badly mounted.—Abbott's disappointment.—Trying to catch the ass.—A kiang that showed fight.

WE must now turn our attention to some of those wild beasts whose timidity of disposition urges them to seek shelter in places that are, in the main, inaccessible to their more dangerous enemies. Every animal instinctively looks for refuge to that quarter which his physical development will enable him most easily to reach, provided it be one which affords such means of living as he can accustom himself to. Thus, while the seal betakes himself to the water, the mole to the ground, the monkey to the trees, and the bat to the air, creatures like the goat or the wild ass seek the mountains and the plateaux, relying on their sureness of foot to carry them safely along narrow paths or steep inclines, and trusting to their

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hardy digestive organs to thrive on the scanty food which the high lands afford. The pursuit of them must therefore necessarily be hazardous, and productive of exciting adventure, as we shall see from the following facts relating to the ibex, the mountain-sheep, and the wild ass.

The ibex and the mountain-sheep, which latter is also known as the argali, both inhabit Central Asia, the ibex trending rather to westward, and the argali more to north and east. Mr. Peter Dobell, the Siberian explorer, met with both animals during his wanderings between the Altai and the Tien Shan Mountains. The ibex he found differing but slightly from the Alpine animal of that name, and the pursuit of him unpleasantly recalled the perils of chamois-hunting.

Mr. Dobell was given to taking long, solitary marches or rambles, preferring to rely on his own instinct rather than to place himself at the mercy of stupid or knavish guides, who, more often than not, were in league with the mountain-robbers. On one of these lonely journeys into the hill-passes he came upon eight of these ibexes : seven in a close group, and the eighth midway between him and them. As he had often coveted their handsome ribbed horns, which he had seen in the huts of the peasants, he determined to possess himself of a pair ; and as the group, though more distant than the single animal, was the easier shot, he fired at one of them, reserving his second barrel for the sentinel-like beast nearest him, in case of need. The shot took effect, but, as ill-luck would have it, he had aimed at the ibex that was nearest the edge of the high platform of rock on which they were standing ; the creature fell forward out of sight, and before the hunter could bring his second barrel to bear on

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another, all had disappeared, wheeling away up a sort of corkscrew path to the right. With some difficulty, Dobell struggled to the top of the platform, and walked to the spot where the dead beast had been struck. But where he had expected to find a mere drop of five or six feet, he saw an almost bottomless abyss, and one more step would have carried him into it after the ibex.

He sprang back horror-stricken, and, going to the farther side of the little platform, decided to follow the upward path which the game had taken, in the hope of still being able to secure one of the animals. Up this he plodded patiently, but at the end of half an hour he seemed to have made but little progress ; there was no game of any sort in sight ; each fresh stage of his climb promised to be more perilous than the one before, and, experienced mountaineer though he was, he could not altogether keep his mind from dwelling on the uncomfortable problem of how he was to get back.

Thus, promising himself every moment that he would go but a few steps farther, he continued to mount, and at last his perseverance was rewarded ; for he came to another platform much longer than the last, bounded on the one side by the same terrible precipice-edge as before, and on the other by a sheer face of rock up which not even an ibex could climb. At the far end of this, where the platform either tapered off to a point or else wound out of sight round the waist of the mountain, were the seven fugitives.

Creeping as close as possible to the rock-face, he stole swiftly forward, and at last, singling out that one of the unsuspecting animals that was farthest from the brink of the abyss, he fired, and the ibex dropped.

Evidently the end of the path did *not* taper off to

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nothing, for four of the panic-stricken creatures rushed along it and disappeared as Dobell hurried towards them. One of the two survivors was about to follow the lead of the others, but his courage seemed to fail him at the last moment, as well it might ; for when the hunter came to examine that terrible path afterwards, he found that it dwindled to a mere ribbon-strip, and, for aught that he could tell, ran on in this way indefinitely.

The second ibex saw the enemy rapidly coming nearer, and, no longer hesitating, turned his back on the way of escape which the others had taken, and sprang boldly across the chasm. Dobell drew up, and, following the fugitive with his eyes, saw for the first time that the hill on the other side of the abyss offered a similar platform to that on which he was standing, but narrower and a good five-and-twenty feet lower ; and at this apparently inaccessible point the ibex had leapt. We may imagine the explorer's astonishment when the creature landed lightly on his feet, and without a stumble ran away out of sight. The remaining ibex now followed his example, and with equal success, leaving Dobell alone with the carcass of the animal he had killed, and scarcely able to believe his eyes over the feat which he had just witnessed. When we remember that twenty-five feet is rather more than twice the height of a reasonably lofty room, we shall not wonder that the ibex is a difficult animal to pursue.

Some time after, Mr. Dobell renewed an acquaintance with the argali that he had already made in Manchuria. Even if, as Cuvier asserted, the Asiatic ibex is the stock from which our domestic goat has sprung, it is not easy to see that the ram, as we know him, is a very close con-



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tion of the mountain-sheep ; for this creature is almost as big as our bulls, and not a whit less dangerous as an antagonist. His horns, the roots of which meet in the centre of the forehead like those of the musk-ox, take a graceful sweep upward and outward, gradually curve downward to the level of the eye, then make another upward and outward turn, each ending in a point that was intended by Nature to be sharp, but which has become blunted by contact with the rocks, and more particularly by the numerous fights in which these ferocious animals so often indulge. The size of the horns may be gauged from the fact that one of them, if pulled into a straight line, would measure just on four feet ; and when shed, if knocked off in a combat, or left behind by a hunter, a hill-fox will seize on it and make a permanent home beside it.

Mr. Dobell witnessed one of these celebrated fights one day, between a sheep that he had tracked to the top of a hill-ridge, and a second beast that seemed to be under the impression that the other wished to deprive him of his mate. The ridge was like a razor-edge, and after having proceeded along it for a dozen yards, Dobell had decided to abandon the chase, when the second argali made his appearance on the far side of the first. How they held their ground Dobell could never discover, but they charged full-speed at one another, and met in a shock that could have hurled even the most active and powerful man straight down the steep hill-side. Yet, so far as he could see—and he was barely out of gun-shot—neither was in the least affected by the collision. Each backed a few feet, then the two pairs of horns crashed together again, with no more ostensible result than before. Again

## HUNTING WILD BEASTS

they separated, and again they closed ; but this time the horns got entangled, and the two bodies rocked fiercely from side to side ; yet the hoofs, firmly planted on the narrow footway, never seemed to stir. At last they shot free again, and, without stopping to take breath, each lowered his head and butted once more.

Perhaps this might have gone on for hours, but the sheep which Dobell had been pursuing happened, in one of his charges, to throw his head on one side, so that his right horn caught the end of his opponent's right, and with such force that it broke off like a green branch, leaving it hanging by a few fibres.

But the wounded animal had not long to wait for his revenge. Instead of running back to buck, he lowered his head till it met the chest of his antagonist, and then by sheer force he pushed him off his feet and over the ridge, so that he fell head-over-heels to the bottom.

As he had now seen as much as he wanted, Dobell turned, and began his perilous walk back to the beginning of the ridge ; but he was still twenty feet from anything like sure ground, when he heard behind him a galloping that could only proceed from the victorious argali. He turned to look ; the angry creature, maddened with the pain of his fight, and somehow connecting the hunter with it, was bearing down on him, and in less than a minute must reach him if he remained where he was.

Dobell swiftly weighed the chances of his certain aim against those of being knocked headlong down the slopes, and felt that the balance tipped in the wrong direction. Once on the platform in which the ridge ended, he would willingly try conclusions with the animal ; and, keeping his eyes fixed ahead, never daring to look down, he covered



### A FIGHT BETWEEN ARGALI

The two huge beasts charged again and again without result, until the horn of one was broken. The wounded animal was, however, equal to the occasion, for he got his head under the chest of the other, and lifted and pushed him over the edge of the precipice.



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those seemingly interminable half-dozen yards, and at length landed safely on the edge of the little tableland, then turned to await events.

The enraged argali came bounding on, clearly unable to stop himself ; and, quick to take advantage of this uncontrollable speed, the sportsman sprang lightly to one side. The ram, in his mad career, rushed straight past him, and of course Dobell had him at his mercy, and without any difficulty he sent a bullet through him as he turned for a second charge.

The kiang, or Thibetan wild ass, is markedly larger than the ordinary donkey, and, in place of the cross which that much-enduring animal bears on his back, has but a single black mark that runs longitudinally. Experienced hunters say that there is scarcely any wild beast so difficult to capture alive, for even the foals are as fleet as antelopes, and the exquisite acuteness of their senses of hearing and smell warn them of man's approach quite soon enough to enable them to reach their mountain strongholds, whither only a goat or a chamois could follow them.

But the Turcos, Thibetans, and Afghans are, as a whole, hardy mountaineers, as well as good shots ; and as they are all very fond of the flesh of the wild ass, which Europeans also esteem highly, they are quite content with taking the dead animal ; and they even organize systematic hunts for the kiang, just as the Kafirs do for the quagga.

Among the men who have tried very hard to take a live kiang was the late Sir James Abbott, an old school-fellow of Lord Beaconsfield, and one of the most brilliant products of our Indian Army. While returning from his



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celebrated ride to Khiva, he fell in with a tribe of friendly Turcomans, and these, though they laughed at the project he had formed, of catching a kiang alive, were very proud to have him accompany them on a hunt after a herd of these animals ; and five of them agreed to take him and his Afghan servant into the hills for that purpose.

Soon after leaving the camp, two of the party were sent on ahead ; the duty of these was to follow an enormous curve that would enable them to sneak round the sides of the hill-range, and cut off any of the kiangs that had ventured into the open in search of pasturage. The rest rode more slowly in a straight line for the hills.

Captain Abbott was the first to catch sight of the coveted beasts, a large herd of which stood peacefully grazing, about a furlong on the hither side of the nearest hill. He pointed them out to one of his guides.

“ Good,” said the Turcoman. “ Now we must all pull up, and wait until we hear our comrades fire.”

The signal was not long in coming. What, in the far distance, had looked like two isolated members of the herd, proved to be the advance horsemen, who, in spite of the animals' extreme watchfulness, had managed stealthily to creep between them and the hills. At the first sound of a gun, the riders gave their horses their heads and galloped madly towards the startled herd.

But now it seemed as though the Captain was to be baulked of his share in the sport. On quitting the camp he had left his heavy service charger behind, and was riding a horse borrowed of the Turcomans ; fast enough, but not up to the weight of a powerfully-built man like himself ; and while his companions rode forward like the wind, he was doomed to make what pace he could. Re-

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ing his servant's offer of an exchange of mounts, he dodged on, but only came up with the hunters when a dozen ass-carcases lay on the ground, and the remainder of the herd had escaped.

But while the Turcomans were offering their condolences and apologies, the Afghan touched his master's arm and pointed across the plain. As luck would have it, there was a straggler trotting up and down in bewildered fashion, looking for his lost companions.

"No, no ; don't shoot," pleaded the Captain to his hosts ; "I mean to have this one. If I can't break him, no one can ;" and he spurred towards the solitary ass. The three best mounted among the Turcomans galloped forward, and easily succeeded in heading off the frightened creature, which turned and trotted dejectedly towards the captain. All the horsemen were now spread round him, and there looked to be no possible way of escape.

"Oh, for a lasso," said Abbott.

The Afghan drew his pistol and would have fired, so as to maim the animal ; but the burly artilleryman rejected the proposal.

"If once I can get my arm round his neck, he'll not get away till some of you have put a halter on him," he said.

But suddenly, to every one's amazement, the kiang quickened his pace to a gallop, and rushed open-mouthed, not at the Captain, but at his horse, which he evidently considered to be his main enemy. Then, for the first time, Abbott realized that even an ass may be a dangerous opponent ; for the beast half-reared and bit the horse on the nose, then caught the bridle with his teeth and tore at it. The soldier stood up in the stirrups and threw

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his arm round the creature's neck ; but muscular though he was, his strength was but a child's against that of the wild ass ; the animal jerked his head free, and it was only by the merest chance that his teeth missed the Captain's hand.

Of course the horse was now beside himself with fright, and made no delay about swinging himself out of the way as soon as he found himself clear. Then, foiled of one enemy, the kiang turned on the Afghan ; but that person had no intention of risking his hands on so savage a beast. Instead, he drew his heavy sabre, and with one blow killed the brave little animal.

## CHAPTER XX

### ADVENTURES AMONG YAKS AND BUFFALOES

the yak.—An animal easily acclimatized.—The yak's method of attack.—Another adventure of Mr. Vigne's.—A hunt that occupies some days.—A perilous mountain-climb.—The first yak shot.—Sudden appearance of a herd.—An awful predicament.—Climbing out of danger, and falling back into it.—An unexpected awakening.—The explanation.—On again after the herd.—Inconvenience of being entertained by an Oriental.—A dreary prospect.—Snow.—The final disappointment.—The Eastern buffalo.—His one good quality.—Stalking a buffalo.—An unlooked-for appearance.—Tiger and buffaloes.—The result of the conflict.

As the goat, the sheep, and the ass have untamed relatives that flee to the mountains to escape from man, although they can do him serious injury if driven to bay, so also has the ox; for in the yak of the Himalayas and Thibet we have merely a large, hairy, humped cow or bull. Most readers have probably seen a menagerie specimen of him, for the yak is very easily acclimatized, so much so that projects have been formed—and, in France, carried into effect—for bringing these mountain-cattle to Europe, and breeding them for the sake of their valuable hair. This movement is regrettable in that most wild beasts, when pressed into the service of man, markedly deteriorate in strength, size, and beauty. The sportsman who

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has shot the wild yak while on his native hills would scarcely agree that he bears any more relationship to the grunting, raw-boned creature which, under the name of "yak," may be seen drawing a wagon in the Central Asiatic villages, than the kiang does to the costermonger's donkey.

When an animal that weighs close upon half a ton and is a foot, or more, longer than the domestic ox, takes to running up mountain-paths or jumping from crag to crag, the man who would hunt him must be prepared to take his chance of a little rough handling ; for Mr. G. T. Vigne tells us that if once the yak loses his temper he will often pursue the offender relentlessly, and never be satisfied till he has got him beneath his feet. When this agreeable situation is arrived at, there is only one more stage in the proceedings ; the yak lies down somewhat abruptly, throwing all his thousand-pound weight on the hapless individual underneath. Of course he can—and sometimes does—use his horns, which are finer and larger than those borne by any of our domestic cattle ; and anyone who has ever come within a few yards of an infuriated bull knows whether a beast thus armed can be troublesome, even when his intention is to repel rather than to detain his enemy.

While Mr. Vigne was travelling through the Himalayas he several times saw solitary yaks on the heights ; but as he had heard a bad character of the animals, and was quite inexperienced in the hunting of these, he left them alone, and forbade his servants to interfere with them. But, as he neared Kokan, he fell in with a Syud, or petty ruler, whom he had met further south, and who insisted upon his staying with him for a few days at his mountain



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hunting-lodge close by ; and on hearing that Vigne had never yet shot a yak, he at once promised him plenty of sport on the morrow.

"You have happened on a fortunate time," said the Syud. "My men have been in the mountains for two days trying to drive the game down." For the yak is so hardy that he can live and find food even as high as the perpetual snow-limit.

In the morning the hunters set out, and, guided by the shouts of the beaters, followed one of the winding paths which, at a fairly easy slope, led ultimately to a pass wide enough for a dozen men to walk abreast in. They climbed readily on, and at last reached a part where the path ceased to wind, and became, instead, a perfectly regular inclined plane that would end in the pass about thirty yards higher up.

They had scarcely begun to climb this when the Syud stopped.

"Listen," he said. "The shouts are farther away. Here !"

A cry came very faintly, as though from the far side of the mountain, instead of from above them, as its predecessors had done. "Either we ought to have taken the other path, or else the herd has broken through the line of beaters," he resumed.

Just then another cry—this time most certainly one of either of fright or warning—came more clearly, sounding as though it proceeded from the far end of the path ahead.

"Had we not better push forward ?" asked Vigne.

For answer the Syud pointed to the crags above them on their right hand. There, sure-footed as a goat, a bull yak was stepping from rock to rock, looking about him

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as though he suspected an enemy behind every boulder. He was a magnificent beast, black and white, with a fringe or skirt of silky hair hanging the whole way round his body from breast to buttock, and with an immense bushy tail that was a perfect plume of long fine hair. Indeed it is largely on account of his handsome tail that the beast is so persistently hunted ; more often than not it is used by Eastern aristocrats as a brush to scare off the flies ; and it is said that no tame yak is ever seen wearing this appendage, his owners having turned it into money.

The Syud pointed to Vigne's gun, intimating that he left the shot to him, and the Englishman fired ; the bull fell forward, rolled to a projecting rock some twenty feet lower, and lay motionless.

The Syud was beginning to offer lengthy congratulations when a heavy stampede sounded in the pass above ; then, suddenly, a dozen yaks appeared at the top of the sloping path, and, on catching sight of the hunters, swept down it like a pack of hounds in full cry. There was little time for words ; the Syud's attendants were still at the foot of the hill, or had joined the beaters on the heights. He had but a single-barrelled gun ; Vigne had only one barrel loaded. On the left, escape was impossible for the path shelved off into a slippery, grassy slope that did not offer so much as a rock or a bush behind which to shelter, and that never stopped till it merged in the plain below. Down this the sure-footed herd could pursue and overtake them as easily as if they remained where they were. The right side was a little—only a little—more promising. It began with a steeper incline than either of the others, that ran for about ten yards upwards if they could cover this space before the infuriated yak

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ached them, all might be well, for above it was an regular belt of rocks near the spot where the dead yak had fallen, behind which they might hope to entrench themselves, and fire and reload comparatively at their ease.

The herd thundered down the path ; the two men exchanged glances, and silently began to scale the slope. Slipping and stumbling and scrambling—for a recent frost had left the usually moist clay with a coating of ice on—the fugitives pressed breathlessly towards the rocks, and were still a few feet from the top of the slope when the foremost yaks, straining and sliding, began to draw up at the spot where the hunters had just been standing. When Vigne heard behind him a succession of angry grunts like those of a discontented hog. He dared not turn to look, but pushed doggedly on, working hands, knees, and toes together. Then a hurried exclamation made him look upwards : the Syud had reached the rocks, and, clinging there with one hand, was holding out the other to help his guest. A vigorous pull hoisted him on to safer ground ; but either he slipped, or else the Syud let go his hand too soon ; at any rate, the next thing he knew was that he was rolling over and over, back again to the path where the yaks stood, pawing the ground, shaking with their tails, and grunting.

The sky seemed to be falling on him, the mountain-side to be coming up to hit him ; the grunts of the yaks welled into a mixture of unearthly and human-like screams ; then the mountain appeared to turn right over and fall upon him ; a dull pain spread through the back of his head ; then something icy-cold touched his brow, and he sat up, rubbing his eyes.

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The yaks had disappeared ; in their place stood the Syud, his attendants, and a dozen of the beaters, while a little Ghorka was standing by him, holding a handful of snow to his forehead. The Syud held out his hand and assisted him to rise.

“ What’s this ? ” asked Vigne. “ Have I been fainting or dreaming ? Where is the herd ? ”

The Syud laughed and patted his guest’s shoulder. “ They have given us the slip,” he said. “ Yes ; your head struck that mound of frozen earth, and you lay insensible. I almost met the same fate in trying to come down to reach you.”

“ How long have I lain here, then ? ”

“ Some minutes. My men had let the herd break through them, after all ; and in trying to get to us to warn us, overtook them at the end of the pass. They were following immediately behind the yaks, as we might have seen if we had not been—otherwise engaged.”

“ O-ho ! But—how was it I escaped the brutes ? ”

The Syud burst out laughing. “ You frightened them out of their wits ; they saw you rolling towards them and they wheeled off down the green slope as if you had been a cannon-ball. But see, here come your spoils.”

Two of the beaters were carrying between them the skin and horns of the yak which Vigne had shot.

“ Have we lost all chance of them, then ? ” he asked.

“ Oh no ; the hunt has not commenced yet. If you feel well enough, we will go on to the pass.”

Vigne, who had sustained no worse ills than a shaking and a severe headache, cheerfully accompanied the Syud and his attendants, while the beaters went off in all directions to join their fellows. It was now afternoon

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At the Syud gave no sign of wishing to return home, and the Englishman patiently accompanied him the whole length of the pass, then up one slope and down another ; over a chasm so wide and deep that, but that the honour of his nation was at stake, he would have declined leaping ; and even then was fain to shut his eyes as he sprang ; and, finally, on to a path that was merely the narrow brink of a precipice. Here the keen easterly wind cut like a scythe, and filled his eyes with water so that he could only follow blindly and trust to his luck not to carry him over the brink.

Dusk was coming on rapidly, but an Eastern potentate was not the sort of host to whom one can give a friendly hint about fatigue, dinner, fire, and a bed ; and Vigne went stubbornly on, setting his teeth, and vaguely wondering how the Syud proposed to find his way home in the dark. It was his first yak-hunt, and he swore privately that it should be his last.

At length the horrible path did widen out, and into a good broad road ; and the Syud came to a sudden stop and pointed upwards. Nearly two thousand feet over their heads a broad tongue of flame was shooting out. " Good ! Some of them must have come across a herd," he said.

Vigne's heart sank. " Er—do we go up *there* now ?" he faltered.

The Syud blew a silver whistle, and the attendants, who were lagging behind with baggage, hastened forward.

" Oh no ; we shall eat and sleep now : we can do nothing more till daylight comes."

The prospect was not alluring, for snow was beginning to fall heavily ; but as a choice of evils it was to be pre-



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ferred to a two-thousand-foot climb at that time of day. An enormous fire was soon lit, and the mystery of the small, awkward bundles with which some of the servants had been hampered all day was now explained; for meat, fruit, coffee, cakes, and blankets were soon forthcoming, and, tolerably well sheltered under overhanging rocks, the whole party passed a comparatively comfortable night.

When Vigne awoke at sunrise, fires were blazing in twenty different spots on the ridge; and, against the snowy background, dozens of yaks and hundreds of ibexes could be seen patiently searching for food. But before breakfast was finished, a thick fog unexpectedly settled over the mountains, cutting off even the nearest fire from sight. The hunters waited an hour—two—three—and at last a sharp wind got up; mist and fog disappeared and the sun lit up every peak and ridge and chasm in view—a magnificent sight to an artist, but one calculated to drive the hunters to distraction, for not a single yak was in sight. The herds that it had taken some days to beat up and drive towards a convenient spot had escaped in the fog; and the mortified Syud was forced to own himself beaten by circumstances, and to lead the way back to his house.

The buffalo of the East, though near of kin to the yak, is quite the opposite in his tastes, for he prefers intense heat and low, muddy plains or marshy forests; moreover, he is as ugly as the yak is handsome. The mental picture which most of us draw of him is really a mixture of the American bison and the South African buffalo—the latter a fine, dignified-looking beast. But the Asiatic

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buffalo is nothing like this ; he has a dirty, bilious-looking face, long, almost straight, horns, which, when he erects his head, seem to lie along his back ; and his face is dismal, disagreeable, and stupid. He is one of the most quarrelsome beasts in creation, and will turn and slay his own blood-brother on next to no provocation.

But he has one undeniable virtue for which we must give him full credit. One Asiatic buffalo probably kills more many tigers in the course of a year as twenty natives put together. His method of killing is illustrated by the following adventure, which happened to the late Major Leveson while he was buffalo-hunting near the ranges.

He had stalked a solitary buffalo for some two or three miles, and at length had the satisfaction of seeing him come to rest by a forest pool which, at that season of the year, contained quite as much mud as water. The Major determined to try a long shot, for there was no wind to be taken into account, and it is never wise to venture too close to a buffalo pool ; where there seems to be but one animal there may be a score, all more or less buried in mud.

He fired, and the effect was not a little startling. The buffalo fell, either dead or mortally wounded ; and at the same moment a tiger, which hitherto had lain concealed in the long grass twenty yards nearer than the Major to the pool, sprang up as if the bullet had pierced him, and plunged off at a frightened gallop towards the water.

The hunter reloaded, and crept gently forward, not averse to securing an extra tiger-skin when it was thrown in his way in this unlooked-for manner. But all of a

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sudden the tiger slowed up, looked on either side of him, then back at the Major ; and Leveson had him " sighted," when all at once the mud of the pool seemed to be moving in every direction, and up sprang ten or a dozen clay-covered buffaloes, which, apathetic enough over the death of their brother, were yet prepared to bid defiance to the ancestral enemy that was coming to disturb their repose. One of them, while the tiger and the sportsman were both hesitating, struggled out of his soft bed, and, standing on the bank with nose lowered, appeared to be sniffing the ground.

Obviously the tiger disliked the situation ; he was hungry, but so were the jackals and vultures, and it looked very much as if they would get their meal before he could procure his. Then a second buffalo came forward, dragged himself on to the hard ground, and stood by the side of his friend. Finally the first trotted forward to inspect, with the evident intention of lashing himself into an unexpected charge.

But this he left rather late ; he came within a dozen feet of the enemy, and where is the tiger that cannot spring at least fifteen feet ? The hungry beast rose without a moment's warning, and fell, with all his tremendous weight, on the buffalo's neck and haunches, of course bearing him to the ground. The bull did not rise again ; still the tiger did not seem quite at home ; instead of tearing open the flesh and glutting himself with the blood of his prey, he cast another furtive glance towards the pool. By this time there were four buffaloes on the bank, and, as the tiger looked round at them, the foremost lowered his head till his horns were almost parallel to the ground, and shot like a cannon-ball at the



### A MATCH FOR THE TIGER

The tiger had disturbed a herd of buffaloes who were enjoying a mud bath. One of them charged him, but was brought to the ground. The second one, however, shot like a cannon-ball at his foe, and, before he could turn, sent his horns through him, killing him at once.





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jungle monster before he could turn and cease to offer him a broadside at which to charge.

The horns went straight through the animal's body, one apparently touching some vital part, for as they were withdrawn he fell motionless. Then the buffalo, as though he felt that he had done his duty, walked with sulky sedateness back to the pool. Major Leveson was a brave man, but on this occasion he let his buffalo and the dead tiger remain where they were, and without delay set off in the opposite direction to rejoin his companions.

## CHAPTER XXI

### WILD-BOAR HUNTING IN THE EAST

Great numbers of boars in the East.—The boars of Andaman.—Dr. Mouat's survey.—Forced into a boar hunt.—The Lieutenant's foolhardy shot.—Charged by the herd.—The attack on the two doctors.—Catching a baby-boar.—The evil consequences thereof.—Comedy verging on tragedy.—Saved by the gunner's mate.—The H.M.S. *Samarang* expedition to the East Indian Archipelago.—A native wild-boar hunt.—A brave Dyak.—Chasing a fugitive boar.—The boar tied up on the main deck of a battleship.—His behaviour.—His plucky escape.

THE wild boar is associated in the average Englishman's mind far more closely with France, Germany, and Poland than with the East. Yet throughout Europe it is fast becoming extinct, and in less than a century from now the hunter is as little likely to come across one of them in Central Europe as on Hampstead Heath, where, by the way, boars were common enough in the twelfth century.

But in the East the process of extermination has still not gone to very great lengths. A ham or a boar's head has no temptation for the palate of a pious Mussulman; and so long as the owner of the ham or head does not interfere with the crops or the young bamboo shoots, Mussulmans and Buddhists alike leave him in peace for the most part. Therefore, as, like other varieties of the

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pig, these animals breed on a very large scale, the East Indies and China are still overrun with them.

Although America and South Africa have some strange and wonderful specimens to show, the Eastern wild boar does not differ greatly from the kind found in Europe. In appearance he is a gaunt, muscular-looking edition of our own domestic boar—smaller in the hams and broader in the chest. The hide of the young animal is of a yellowish brown, but with advancing years this develops into brindled grey, or sometimes coal-black. In a general way the females are not aggressive, except in defence of their young ; then they will bite like bulldogs, often inflicting as much injury with their teeth as their mates could do with their tusks.

The ugliest, if not quite the most ferocious, type is commonly found in Sumatra, the Nicobar Islands, and South Burmah, though its original home was probably the Andaman Islands, whence the establishment of the great convict-station has routed it.

Just after the Mutiny, however, when Surgeon-Major Mouat, Inspector of Indian Prisons, was sent to Andaman to arrange about the site of the new penal settlement, the country round was overrun by these creatures ; and he and his subordinate, Dr. Playfair, had plenty of hog-hunting.

Their first experience in this direction was forced upon them rather than sought by them, for at the time it began they were peacefully occupied in land-surveying. A short distance away, a naval Lieutenant and a small guard of bluejackets were keeping them in sight, for the good conduct of the savage Andamanners (or *Mincopie*) was not altogether to be relied upon.

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Finding the time hang heavy on their hands, the sailors had begun to stir the bushes round about in search of possible game. Near by where the Lieutenant stood was the mouth of a tiny valley choked with saplings and brushwood ; and, seeing a dark body moving within, he somewhat inadvisedly drew his revolver and fired at the dusky object. A squeal of combined fury and agony followed the shot, and immediately the bushes separated, and out rushed, not one wild boar, but nearer a couple of score. Just in the nick of time the young officer took a flying leap over a low bush-hedge, and landed where he was well screened from danger. The herd rushed madly forward, followed more slowly by the unlucky one that had been wounded by the revolver-bullet, and charged straight through the already scattered and now startled guard.

Of course, all the sailors were armed with loaded rifles, but no one dared fire on the spur of the moment for fear of hitting his fellows. Butt-ends were accordingly brought into play, and with these and the revolver of the officer, who had now rejoined his men, three or four of the animals were killed. The rest made a stampede for the hillock where the two army surgeons were at work, too engrossed with their measurements to have paid any attention to the noise below, which, from the men's laughter and the delighted barking of the ship's dog, they did not suppose to give warning of any danger.

Dashing straight at an old warrant-officer who stood agape, the pigs knocked him down, raced over his body, and scaled the hill like a pack of wolves, leaving Dr. Mouat bare time to snatch up the rifle which he had prudently laid close at hand. Without more ado he emptied both barrels into the little herd, and then clubbed his weapon,

## WILD-BOAR HUNTING IN THE EAST

at the same time gently backing towards the place where he supposed his companion to be standing, so that they might fight back to back till relief came from below.

But this resistance startled the boars, and, instead of charging the doctor, they drew back in a grunting, squealing semicircle, "leering like Mephistopheles"—as he afterwards said—and erecting their hairpin-like bristles till they looked like a group of short-quilled porcupines. The interval thus gained Mouat employed in reloading one of his barrels, and now aiming at the most vicious-looking of the assembly, he fired again. The boar dropped, and his brethren, instead of charging the murderer, as American swine undoubtedly would have done, turned in a body, and fled back towards where the sailors were coming to meet them at the double ; all except one little pig—the baby of the herd—which, frightened and bewildered, began to run round and round the hill-summit.

Meanwhile Dr. Playfair had had no sport at all, for the hogs had hitherto been placing themselves between him and the spot where his rifle lay. He was an ardent zoologist, as well as a most successful tamer of wild beasts, and the sight of the baby-boar now careering helplessly about the hill-top was a greater temptation than he could resist.

"I'm going to have this one if I die for it," he shouted ; and, leaving his friend to pursue the others or not, according to inclination, Playfair made a clutch at the tiny pig.

Those who have watched rustic sports know that to catch the young domestic porker is no trifling task ; and here was a creature that probably had never before seen a human being, and that came of a stock as fleet of foot



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as hares. The doctor dodged ; so did the pig ; and the chase began. At length, attracted by the grunts at the foot of the hill, the little animal doubled, and began to make a determined dash to reach his friends. In so doing he ran straight into the arms of his pursuer, who was just then on the brow of the slope. The doctor stooped, grasped the young boar by one of its fore-feet ; then, missing his footing, rolled, pig in hand, down the slope towards the very midst of what was left of the herd.

For a moment Dr. Mouat was speechless and powerless with laughter, but it soon became apparent that the accident was no joking matter. Playfair was a big, heavily built man, and, once he started rolling, was quite unable to stop himself. Holding firmly by his captive, in spite of its snapping at his wrist with teeth not so small but that they could inflict a painful bite, he clutched at every bush or blade of grass that might check his downward career, but in vain. Meanwhile the herd, furious at the indignity put upon one of their number, had wheeled round, and were waiting to give the offender a warm reception.

The sailors, fully appreciating the horribly dangerous plight in which the doctor must now find himself, yet not daring to fire for fear of hitting him, redoubled their speed ; and now, dreading every moment to see the unfortunate man torn to ribbons by the enraged boars, set to work, some with cutlasses, others with butt-ends, to drive off the enemy. Attacked thus in their rear, the savage beasts left the prostrate man, on whose body they had been preparing to execute a sort of war-dance, and turned on the sailors, leaving Playfair, still pig in hand, with no worse harm than a bite on the foot from an old



### ATTACKED BY BOARS

Dr. Playfair captured a fine young pig, but its squealing excited the fury of a full-grown boar with tremendous tusks, which charged at him full speed. The doctor would not release his captive, and had not a timely shot from an old gunner's mate stopped the boar, matters would have proved very serious for him.



## WILD-BOAR HUNTING IN THE EAST

now, which was speedily put to flight by a vigorous lunge from the doctor's spurred heel. He was scrambling to his feet, too dazed and giddy to notice that a steady rifle-fire was going on from somebody close to him, when, at another despairing squeak from his prisoner, a full-grown boar, the sight of whose tusks was enough to make a man shudder, turned and charged at the unarmed doctor.

Playfair looked desperately round him for a weapon of some sort, but nothing lay to hand. If he let his pig go now, he knew that, when the tale got about, he would be subject to the sort of ridicule at the hands of his brother officers that a healthy Englishman dreads even more than death; yet, so long as he held the little beast, he was exasperating the on-coming boar as well as diminishing his own chance of self-defence.

He was still standing irresolute, with the boar scarcely now a half-dozen feet away from him, when some one growled in his ear, "I think this'll do *his* business, sir"; and then a rifle went off almost at his very elbow, and the boar fell, tearing up the earth with his tusks, and unable to move. The old gunner who had been knocked down by the herd on their way to the hill had been quietly avenging the insult to his dignity by taking up a point of vantage and picking off the outlying animals, one at a time, as fast as he could reload his rifle; and, in all probability, the old fellow's cool-headedness and accurate aim had saved the doctor's life.

Whether the young boar thus captured was ever successfully tamed or no does not transpire. The French naturalist Louis Figuier says that the animal, when taken young, is "capable of a certain amount of training, grows fond of his master, and likes to be petted."

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Another attempt at taming one of these Eastern boars was made by a naval surgeon, Arthur Adams, who accompanied Sir Edward Belcher's surveying expedition of the East Indian Archipelago, on board H.M.S. *Samarang*. While lying off the east coast of Borneo, Dr. Adams and some of the ship's officers were invited by the son of the headman of a coast village to a native boar-hunt. In the Far East, on the outskirts of almost every village, may be found any number of holes in the ground—some that have been used as wild-beast traps ; others the remains of dis-used wells whose sides have fallen in, and the openings of which have become choked with vegetation. In such holes as these the boar loves to hide, and will sometimes make one of them his lifelong home, from which he occasionally sallies out in search of food or for converse with his kind. It was to a patch of ground dotted with such pitfalls that the Dyaks now led their guests. The Englishmen were armed with rifles, and the natives with long, iron-headed spears ; and the party was accompanied by a small pack of savage dogs of Bornean breed.

The dogs wasted little time in turning out the game. The East Indian method of hunting the boar is to send the hounds on ahead, and, by the time the spearmen arrive on the scene, they expect to find the animal routed out, penned in by dogs, and quite ready to afford them all the sport they require. On this occasion no one was disappointed, for irate squeals and savage barkings announced what had happened before ever the hunters got inside the low coppice where the pits were.

The boar proved to be one of the hugest of his species—grey-black, whiskered, tufted, and tusked, and about as ugly and malevolent-looking as he was long. Already



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Two of the dogs lay on the ground, ripped up, and writhing in their last agony ; a third was worrying the incensed brute's hocks and hams ; a fourth was just recoiling with his cheek laid open—the result of an attempted snap at the boar's snout ; while a fifth had seized the game by the left ear, and was hanging on as though his life depended on his hold ; and, in a great measure, it did.

The Englishmen, seeing how things stood, left the sport in the hands of their hosts ; for they had only their guns, and there was not much satisfaction to be got out of making a mere target of the boar.

And now the beast's extraordinary strength became evident, for, with a swift backward jerk of the head, he suddenly pulled the huge hound that held his ear right off his fore-feet ; then gave a lunge forward again, screaming with pain the while, and flung his persecutor sideways to the ground. The courageous hound would not, however, leave go of the ear in which his teeth had met ; and it was only after another desperate jerk that the boar could free himself, when, leaving half his ear in the dog's mouth, he made a determined charge at the Dyak spear-men. Two of these were so startled at the vigour of the animal's onslaught that they turned and fled without further parley. But the headman's son, a mere boy, who was really the point at which the boar was aiming, did not give back an inch, but stood with lance extended, waiting for the adversary to come on.

Adams and the other officers, with a low murmur of applause at the lad's cool pluck, at once pointed their guns in case the young Dyak's nerve should fail him at the last moment. But the boy stood firm, and, as the boar made a dash at him, drove his spear well home into

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the animal's fleshy neck, and there kept him, as it were, at arm's length, while those of the Dyaks who had not fled speedily put an end to him.

It was late in the afternoon before a second boar was discovered ; and he, unlike his brother, never gave the dogs a chance at him, but set off at full speed downhill towards the sea-beach. Hunters and hounds followed as fast as they might ; but though they searched till the *Samarang's* sun-down gun summoned the officers on board again, no trace of the fugitive was to be seen.

The Englishmen had taken leave of their entertainers, and had got off in the pinnace that had been sent ashore for them, when suddenly the doctor espied a black head swimming across the river-mouth just outside of which the ship lay at anchor. He pointed it out to the First Lieutenant, who at once exclaimed : " Why, there goes our boar ! "

" If we could catch him——" hinted the surgeon.

" Why not ? " The Lieutenant gave a couple of rapid orders to the crew, and the boat swung round into the little cross-current against which the boar was trying to make headway, and in a dozen strokes was abreast of him. Meanwhile, plans for his capture were being matured, and as the men rested on their oars, the petty-officer who had come ashore in charge of the cutter's crew deftly dropped a noose over the swimmer's head and drew it tight.

" What now ? " asked the Lieutenant.

" Tow him aboard, sir, if he won't tow us," suggested the man.

This was done, the officers in the stern keeping the boar

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at a respectful distance by means of a couple of boat-hooks.

The crew were soon safe on board, but still there was the problem of the boar, which at present was grunting spiteously about the ship's side, waiting to be hauled up. How to get him up without his doing damage to the haulers was the difficulty ; for one sight of the hideous head was sufficient to make most of the sailors stand aloof. A shark or a sea-lion or a sea-serpent would have been all very well, but an object like this was out of their line altogether.

"Now haul away there, some of yer !" roared the petty-officer who had performed the lassoing feat, setting the example himself ; and between two or three of them the — fortunately for them — half-unconscious boar was dragged on board ; and, before he could become offensive, was hustled between two guns on the main deck and made fast there with a rope extending taut from each gun to his neck.

All that evening and the next day the men pressed various sorts of food on him, but he refused everything, and looked so uncommonly wicked whenever he was approached that men who would have tackled a shark or a dozen savages singlehanded found themselves looking nervously at the ropes that held him, to make sure that he could not escape. Dr. Adams still hoped at least to keep him alive, if not to tame him ; but these hopes were dissipated when, about the middle of the third day of captivity, one of the men shouted that the boar was escaping.

Somehow or other he had gradually wriggled his head back through the noose, which his captors had naturally

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feared to draw too tightly when he was made fast to the guns ; and while the onlookers were arming themselves with mops, ropes-ends, or hand-spikes, the persevering beast made a dive through a port, and was soon swimming landwards.

“ Bravo ! ” cried the Captain, who, with Dr. Adams, had come on the scene. “ Give him a cheer, men.”

And being honest fellows, who liked to see fair play and no favour, and the best man winning, the crew cheered roundly, while the victorious boar landed safely and scuttled off to his native wood.

## CHAPTER XXII

### ADVENTURES WITH THE GRISLY AND THE AMERICAN BLACK BEAR

Grizzly or grisly ?—The terror of the North-West.—A zoologist's adventures among the trappers.—A hungry grisly.—Tracking "Ephraim."—Pursued.—The sheltering bluff.—Caught by the bear.—Given up for dead.—The dead man comes to life again.—Chewed by a grisly.—Colonel Frémont.—The musquaw, or black bear.—An almost extinct animal.—Reduced to bear's meat.—Fight between two musquaws.—Treed.—Nearly buried alive.—A resolute trapper.—Attitude of the Indians towards the dead musquaws.

THE correct spelling of the name of this monster of the West is a question for etymologists to decide. "Grizzly," we all know, means greyish ; and more often than not it exactly describes the shade of the animal's coat. On the other hand, he has been known, for time out of mind, to naturalists as *Ursus ferox* ; and what adjective can better express the Latin *ferox* than our own Anglo-Saxon word "grisly"—i.e., a wild thing, which is to be dreaded or shuddered at ?

Grisly, then, let us call him here ; for if there be one of the Mammalia that is to be feared more than the lion or the tiger, it is he.

In a general way the lower animals must be said to be better judges than ourselves of the extent to which one



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of their number is to be regarded with awe and respect ; and it is surely a significant fact that even the huge half-starved wolves of the West dare not so much as touch a carcass that has been under the breath of a grisly ; more, that a herd of bisons will flee at his approach. Even after he is dead, few wild beasts will come near his corpse ; and the very sight of the skin after it has been removed from the dead body will create the greatest terror among them. Mr. Wood relates an anecdote of a hunter who had killed one of these creatures, and not being able by himself to carry home the skin, was obliged to leave it till he could return with assistance. The carcass lay unprotected for fifteen hours in a locality abounding with wolves ; yet, when the hunters arrived at the spot, there was no sign of any other animal having ventured within several yards of it. The same author adds that no American horse will allow a grisly-skin to be placed on his shoulders unless he has been specially trained thereto.

How far this species of bear is actually carnivorous it is difficult to say ; for it generally happens that those travellers who have the most horrific experiences to relate are those whose testimony must be received with the greatest amount of caution. But we shall not stray far from the truth in saying that the grisly only eats the flesh of a living creature when it is impossible to obtain the roots or berries or other vegetable matter that are more properly his natural food. George Ruxton, a traveller and zoologist of some note in the middle of the last century, relates an instance of a flesh-eating bear that came under his notice while taking up his abode with some trappers in the backwoods, and one that is in all respects feasible

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One day it was reported that a grisly had been seen in rather dangerous proximity to the camp. For him to venture so near a human habitation argued that the animal was hungry ; for, in most cases, he is possessed by the same instinctive, underlying dread of man that all wild beasts have, no matter how ferocious ; indeed, it is even stated that, so long as he is not exasperated, the mere scent of a man's clothes will drive him away.

Determined to be beforehand with the enemy, all the trappers turned out, Mr. Ruxton with them ; and breaking themselves up into parties of three, they began to examine minutely the country round. With Ruxton were François Sublette, a Frenchman, and a Yankee named Glass, the latter famed among the backwoodsmen for his unswerving pluck and presence of mind, and his many encounters with "Ephraim," as the grisly is popularly named among the trappers.

From early morning till within a hour of dusk the search was in vain ; and the three hunters were determining to go back to camp in the hope of their companions having met with better luck, when Sublette, who was walking a little ahead, suddenly stopped and held up a warning hand. Under a tree, and with his back turned to them, was a bear nine feet long and weighing considerably more than half a ton.

Glass raised his gun and fired off one barrel ; and, as the animal dropped, Sublette fired twice, hitting him with both shots. Ruxton gave vent to a shout of triumph, and started to run towards the fallen beast, but Glass pulled him sharply back.

"Go slow, partner," he said. "Yer never know——"  
His sentence broke off abruptly ; he stopped and half

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turned, as though to run back the way they had come ; while the Frenchman, clutching Ruxton by the sleeve, screamed in his ear : “ Run, run—*pour l’amour de Dieu !* Back to the bluff !”

The Englishman needed no second telling, for at his shout the seemingly lifeless bear had risen to his feet, and now, turning and seeing his tormentors, plunged towards them at a great rate, as though their bullets were no more than peppercorns. Running close on Sublette’s heels, Ruxton followed the Frenchman at full speed towards their only possible place of safety—a deep overhanging bluff, which here and there might afford a foothold for a man, on which, from its narrowness, the monstrous grisly would not venture. His flight led him by great good luck to a part of the cliff where ran a platform a foot wide, less than six feet from the top ; ten feet below this was a second and broader ledge, to which he could drop at need without much fear of losing his balance and falling down the remaining few feet to the low level. Shouting to attract the Frenchman’s attention to this, he lowered himself to the first ledge, where he was immediately joined by his fellow-fugitive. Arrived here, they had a moment’s breathing-space in which to look for Glass, their eyes being now on a level with the ground which they had just passed over.

The third man, less quick on his feet than they, as well as having been the last to flee, was still some thirty yards from the bluff-edge, and the grisly was not twenty behind him.

“ Shoot ! Your gun is loaded !” shrieked Sublette.

Ruxton cocked his gun, though well aware that he could only by an almost impossible miracle hit the bear ;

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For all three were almost in a straight line, Glass's body acting as a shield to his pursuer.

The Englishman looked helplessly at Sublette, who now snatched the gun from his nervous hands, only to find that, until the bear should rear, he was in no better position to shoot than Ruxton had been. For a wonder, the grisly at that moment *did* elect to spring up on his haunches, and the Frenchman fired both barrels. But, alas ! one bullet struck the low-hanging branch of a tree, and the other either passed through the animal's long fur or else inflicted a mere skin-wound ; for his pace was in no way diminished.

Guessing the state of things, and aware from the rapid and continued crunch-crunch on the dead leaves behind him that he would never reach the bluff, the wily Glass made a sharp half-turn to his right towards a great oak-trunk, hoping to be able to dodge the bear round it at least long enough to give his friends time to reload. But as he turned, his heel slipped on a wet fungus ; and, clutching desperately at the air with his right hand, and brandishing his weapon with his left, he fell backwards to the ground.

A grey mist came over Ruxton's eyes ; then for a minute the world went round with him, and he fell to the platform below. Meanwhile, Sublette, his hair on end with horror, had reloaded his own gun ; but, as ill-luck would have it, Glass had fallen behind the tree round which he had hoped to dodge ; and, before the Frenchman could take aim, the bear was sheltered by the trunk of that tree, and snarling over the prostrate man. Then, as might happen under similar circumstances to the bravest of men, Sublette lost his head,



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and, unmindful that he was leaving in the lurch a man with whom he had lived for more than ten years, he dropped to the ledge below, lowered the half-unconscious Englishman to the bottom level, and hurried him off through the twilight towards their camp.

The news that Glass was dead spread horror among even these tough fellows, who were accustomed to carry their lives in their hands ; and several of them, tired though they were, set off with torches, determined to find the remains of their friend and to avenge his death. But the spot where the bluff-ridge was situated was five miles from the camp ; the ridge itself extended any number of miles in a curved line ; and Sublette being too unstrung to accompany the search-party, they were at last obliged to abandon their mournful task.

At breakfast the next morning Ruxton and Sublette were giving a fuller account of their misadventure, when a pale-faced, weary-looking man limped painfully out from among the trees, and said in a cheerful, familiar voice that startled the trappers almost out of their boots :

“ Who'll go back an' fetch Ephraim's skin ? ”

The backwoodsmen could scarcely believe their own senses. There stood Glass, safe if not sound, and not so seriously injured but that he had been able to walk five miles with an empty stomach, and could now stand grinning at his comrades' bewilderment. But, as the men pressed round him, he turned giddy and fell into a deep swoon.

While restoratives were being applied, one of the men, with a sudden cry of horror, pointed to the hero's right side. His stout leather jacket had been torn into a hole, and his hip and ribs were horribly lacerated—not so much



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y claws as by teeth. Poor fellow ! the flesh was as raw, and one or two ribs as much exposed, as though half a dozen dogs or a hundred rats had been gnawing at him. It was some days before Glass was well enough to be able to give any connected account of his ghastly adventure. When it transpired that the instant he fell the bear dashed upon him, planting one fore-foot on his right hip, which, however, was so well protected by the hunter's leather tunic that the claws did not immediately cut a way through to the flesh, though the weight of the great hairy paw kept Glass pinned to the ground. The grisly, between rage and hunger, then tore with his teeth at the trapper's side, and soon succeeded in snatching away a mouthful of the clothes that protected his ribs.

Meanwhile, the Yankee was not disposed to give away his life. His gun had fortunately been at half-cock when he fell, so that the shock had not caused it to explode—for one barrel was still loaded. Gradually bringing the muzzle to bear on the hungry brute, and keeping the forefinger of his left hand on the trigger, he pulled the hammer back to full-cock with his thumb. That moment he thought would have been his last, for, startled and further enraged by the click, the grisly gave a vicious snarl, and, digging his teeth into the now naked flesh, began deliberately to gnaw it.

Still the brave fellow did not lose courage. An inch, or rather a hair's-breadth, at a time he raised the gun-muzzle till it covered the hairy throat ; then, pinning his life to the chance of a single shot, he pulled the trigger. What happened immediately he was unable to say, for between pain, shock, and loss of blood, he fainted. When he regained consciousness his body was so stiff that he

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could scarcely sit up. The bear lay dead, for, passing through the throat upwards, the bullet had penetrated to the brain. The brute had fallen in such a manner that his forehead stanchd the flow of blood from the man's side, and it only began afresh when he tore the hair from it in rising to his feet.

This was not the only grisly that troubled the peace of the camp during Mr. Ruxton's stay there. Within the next few weeks three or four were shot, and shortly before the Englishman left, one was both trapped and shot. Iron gins were kept placed in likely spots round about the camp ; but, as often as not, the mark that had to be placed against them to warn any passing foot-passenger was sufficient to scare away the intended victim.

It was the duty of " Old Rube," one of the trappers, to go round and inspect these traps daily, and Ruxton frequently accompanied him. To their great astonishment, one gin set on the barren ground outside the patch of woodland was missing one day ; and a brief inspection of the ground showed the old hunter that bear-tracks led away from the spot in a curved line. The track was followed cautiously but swiftly, till a clink of metal a few yards ahead made the two men pull up short.

Separated from them by a short space of rocky, uneven ground was a well-grown grisly, which, at sight of the new-comers, started forward angrily, but almost instantly stopped again, uttering a piteous whine. The unhappy brute was caught by one of his hind-legs in the teeth of the iron gin, which, notwithstanding its weight and secure fastening, he had jerked free, and had limped away with it still fast clinging to his hock.

Rube was about to fire, but Mr. Ruxton stayed his

## AND THE AMERICAN BLACK BEAR

and, that they might watch the animal's behaviour. Drooping his head, the grisly solemnly licked the iron, as though to conciliate it; then knocked it resoundingly against a rock, giving vent to a moan of pain at the result; then once more licked the iron apologetically. However great his love of sport may be, it goes to the heart of any decent man to see an animal hurt when it has no power of retaliation, and the first instinct of both hunters was to set poor Bruin free; but prudence and experience gave other counsel, and a well-aimed bullet from the old trapper's gun put the bear out of his misery.

By the side of the grisly, the American black bear, or musquaw, seems harmless and cowardly; but those who have lived in the backwoods tell a different tale. Colonel Frémont, an American engineer whose name was almost as well known in our fathers' or grandfathers' day as "Buffalo Bill's" is in our own, was well qualified to write of these animals, for while he was engaged on the Missouri survey he was constantly meeting with them. The prevalence of the musquaw in Frémont's day would astonish the modern hunter who has never seen, and perhaps may never see, one; for, being much less dreaded than the grisly, he has been pursued by many who would prudently leave his fiercer relative in peace. He does not breed so rapidly as the grisly, and his fur and fat are such valuable articles of commerce that, for the sake of them, he has been hunted down without mercy during the past fifty years.

While on his journey it was more than once Frémont's lot to be hard beset to find food for himself and his followers—in fact, on one occasion famine pressed them so

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close that they were obliged to kill and eat a wild dog that they themselves had saved from starvation, and had for some months made a pet of ; and Frémont, knowing the excellent qualities of bear's flesh, determined that the first musquaw that put in an appearance should go to fill the larder.

It was not long before some of the party discovered a track. The black bear is easier to trace than any of his kind, for he has a habit of going continually over the same ground, often thus wearing an actual path that even an inexperienced eye could follow without much difficulty. Two white men and two redskins were told off to track the animals, and these in a very little time came upon a scene that they had scarcely anticipated, though such an occurrence is by no means uncommon. On a small treeless space were three black bears—one, a female, standing placidly by, while the two males were grappling tooth and claw one with the other.

One of the Yankees instantly shot the female, and she fell dead ; while his friend with his gun, and the Indians with their bows, opened fire on the two combatants. One of these fell almost immediately, but the other, sufficiently wounded to be very furious, dashed towards the shooters. The Indians, swift of foot as deer, seemed to care little for this ; for they merely dodged from trunk to trunk of the trees that encircled the space, shooting an arrow at the enemy whenever chance offered. But the Yankees, heavily clad, and neither of them particularly active, at once swarmed up a tree, trusting to the usually skilled aim of the Indians to bring the bear down if he should attempt to climb after them.

Between so many assailants the bear hesitated, but at



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most decided in favour of those in the tree, and accordingly began to mount slowly and cautiously. This was just what the redskins wanted, for, instead of a target that dodged about and made at them before they could get him, they now had one that at least confined itself to a certain area, and allowed them to shoot at it in peace.

One of the Yankees, seated in an uncomfortable fork of the tree, had now found time to reload, and, leaning forward as far as he dared, fired at the head of the bear as it came to the level of the lowest bough. The animal dropped dead ; but the hunter had leaned just a little too far, and, before he could save himself, fell headlong to the ground, where he lay apparently stunned by the fall. At the same time a warning cry from the Indians made his companion peer down. The unexpected had happened. The first of the he-bears had only been wounded, and now gathered himself together to take a hand in the proceedings. This was rather unfortunate, for the second hunter had let fall his gun in climbing the tree ; and of the Indians, one had exhausted the contents of his quiver, and the other had but two arrows left.

Stepping forward in a determined manner, the musquaw went straight up to where the injured man lay, sniffed at the body, turned it over with his paw, and at last squatted down reflectively by the side of it. The treed man was now at his wits' end, for, if he shouted to the Indians to go for help, he would at once attract the bear's attention to himself ; and the redskins were at present calmly taking counsel behind a tree. As long as the fallen man lay unconscious, or, if conscious, did not move, he was probably safe. But what about himself ? He was already desperately tired, and faint from hunger ;



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and if aid did not soon come he must surrender at discretion, unless by possible good luck he could, unnoticed by the bear, slip down and reach his rifle.

At last the Indian shot his two remaining arrows : the first went wide ; the second fell a little short, striking the musquaw on the haunch, but causing him so little inconvenience that he did not so much as growl or look round.

Half an hour went by, and still neither bear nor Indians nor prostrate man moved. But after a while the brute rose up, and began methodically to tear away the earth near the body, as though preparing a grave for it. The watcher in the tree shuddered, and could scarcely refrain from crying out in horror, for he was well aware that the grisly, and sometimes the musquaw, is in the habit of burying his provisions ; and here was his friend about to undergo premature entombment.

Thus driven to extremities, he no longer hesitated, but slid down the tree, snatched up his gun, and, running as swiftly and lightly as was possible to a man who was cramped and numbed with such a long imprisonment, sought a point of vantage behind a rock where he could reload in safety and get a tolerably sure shot at the gravedigger.

Bang, bang, went the two barrels, and this time the musquaw fell never to get up again ; while, to the shooter's astonishment, up jumped his mate, but little the worse for his fall.

" I see him coming before ever I fell out of the tree ; guess I took him in tolerable neat," he observed, coolly pointing at the carcass.

That night there was great rejoicing in the famished camp ; and, in the course of the evening, Frémont learned

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something about the Indian attitude towards the musquaw that was quite new to him. Three braves came up and begged the heads of the slaughtered animals, and, permission being granted, they laid each on a separate blanket, and proceeded to decorate all three with necklaces, feathers, bits of metal, and other treasures. Then the two Yankee hunters were requested to step forward and puff some of their tobacco-smoke into the dead nostrils. While these good fellows thus humoured the children of the forest, the two redskins who had had a share in the death of the bears addressed a long, formal speech to what was left of them, the substance of which was a general apology on behalf of the tribe for any inconvenience to which the musquaws might have been put, and a fervent hope that the surviving bears of the forest would not take vengeance on the tribe for the death of their kinsfolk.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### AMONG LLAMAS AND MUSTANGS AND AMERICAN WILD CATTLE

The llama as a beast of burden.—Mr. George Mathison.—A guanaco hunt.—Method of driving the game.—A wild beast that cannot show fight.—The guanaco's unpleasant equivalent to fighting.—“Wild” cattle and horses.—Mr. Thomas Young.—Stopped by a herd of wild cattle.—The chase.—Attempted escape by water.—A ducking.—Between crocodiles, drowning, and savage bulls.—A faithful horse.—Projected revenge.—Lassoing the wild cattle.—Horse-breaking among the Indians.—Behaviour of the horses in the water.—Brutality towards horses in South America.—Darwin as a traveller.—Gauchos and wild horses.—A novel method of breaking.—Extraordinary feat of horsemanship by *Gauchos domidors*.

THE llama is the Western equivalent to the camel—humpless, smaller, and much more slightly and elegantly built.

If Kipling's Atkins anathematizes the “commissariat camuel” as a beast of burden, what would he say of the llama? The camel is at least affected by a dose of “stretcher-pole”; but all the castigation in the world will not stir his American relative beyond the pace he chooses for himself—generally a slow one—or make him move on if once he elects to stop. For the transport of goods over the Cordilleras no beast could be better, if he

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could only move a little faster ; and, till European colonization began, the South American Indian used no other animal for this purpose.

The wild llama can, however, move sharply enough ; and, as he can climb with the agility of a goat, he is not always an easy capture. The special variety known as the *guanaco* is hunted for the sake of his flesh, hair, and skin ; also, at times, with the view of domesticating him ; and a picturesque account of one of these hunts is given by Mr. George Mathison.

This traveller was proceeding on horseback across the Argentine, from east to west, and falling in with some hospitable Gauchos, entered heartily into their plans for a big guanaco-hunt near the mountains. Early in the morning several Gauchos set out as an advance party, and, leaving their horses on the plain, climbed the heights with the intention of driving the game down to the valley. This was slow work, because, in spite of his timidity, the guanaco is a most inquisitive animal, and often will not be put to flight even by the firing of guns close at hand. And so, when Mathison and his conductors reached the valley later in the day, though there were any number of guanacos in sight that could easily have been reached with a bullet, there was not one near enough to be lassoed.

On looking upwards the Englishman could see that a couple of herds, each of about thirty llamas, were slowly being driven down the slopes. One, having ventured too near the beaters, had been safely lassoed, and was kicking and neighing like a horse, while his captor tied him securely to a tree-stump ; another was backing nervously away from a Gaucho who, by various arts, was seeking to

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interest him while he got within lassoing distance. The mounted hunters at once sought what concealment they could, squeezing themselves and their horses behind rocks or into tiny ravines, so that they might form no obstacle to the guanacos' descent.

From his hiding-place Mathison could hear the occasional horse-like cries and the peculiar pit-pat footfalls drawing nearer ; then half a dozen of the animals came along the valley at a questioning little trot ; then a few more ; and at last the bulk of the two herds. The hitherto concealed and silent Gauchos now spurred into the open, and in a minute all the llamas were surrounded.

Mathison had seen a good many wild animals caught or killed, but never any that offered so little resistance as these. The one half seemed fascinated by fear, the other roused by languid curiosity at sight of the horses. The first were lassoed in no time, towed out of the ring, and handed over to the attendant beaters, who made them fast to stumps and tree-trunks. But the inquisitiveness of the second group was not so great as to rob them of their customary wariness. Some even managed slyly to edge between the Gauchos and clamber up the mountain-side again, in which case a bullet cut short their projected flight. The rest, seeing themselves driven to bay, did what they could in self-defence, which was deplorably little.

Perhaps the most curious fact about the guanaco, and probably one without parallel among the rest of the animal kingdom, is that in a wild state he is harmless, and yet, when tamed, he often becomes somewhat dangerous. The domesticated llama has a trick, when out of temper, of working round to the back of a man and



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striking him so violently with his knees as to cause, in many cases, serious pain and injury.

But these animals had not yet learned this trick ; instead, some of them began to put into practice another, which was perfectly harmless in the strict sense, but exceedingly revolting all the same. Whenever a Gaucho approached one of them closely the animal immediately spat at him a mixture of saliva and undigested food. Mathison had been told by Indians that the llama ejects poisonous matter which burns and blisters whatever it touches. But the hardy Gauchos laughed as carelessly at the idea as at the obnoxious act itself, and in a short time had made prisoners of even the most virulent of the expectorators.

When the English traveller in America first catches sight of a wild horse or bull, he cannot help regarding the animal as, in some sort, a fraud, because he is so *very* much like his European domestic relative. And thereby hangs an explanation. These horses and cattle are not “ wild ” in the sense that the bison, the yak, or the zebra are ; they are the descendants of animals as peaceable as those which graze on our own commons and meadows.

Savage man generally tries to adapt himself to Nature as he finds her, but civilized man endeavours, more often than not, to twist her round to his own purpose ; and so, when the Spanish invaders of South America found the natives contentedly using the llama as a beast of burden, never having heard of horses or cattle, they impatiently sent to Europe for consignments of the animals to which they had been accustomed. These bred freely and wandered widely, and, gradually forgetting that they had

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ever served man, at last threw off his yoke altogether whenever they could. Therefore, if we want the *true* American wild bull, we must go to the bison, which will be treated in a later chapter ; and if we want the true American wild horse, we must ask the geologist to show us the petrified remains of an animal more than half as big again as our own dray-horse, or of another little creature no bigger than a Shetland pony.

Necessarily, then, much of the time of the American stock-breeder is given up to the reclaiming of these so-called wild cattle or horses, and to forcing the unhappy creatures back to their original servitude ; and the process sometimes develops itself into a veritable wild-beast hunt.

While acting as superintendent of the British Central American Land Company, Mr. Thomas Young saw a good deal of "cow-catching" done in Honduras, by means of lassos that were made of the tough bark of the *maho*-tree. These Honduras cattle seem to have been particularly savage, for several times Mr. Young was attacked by them without having given them the least provocation.

Once he had stopped to water his horse at a tributary stream, when a sudden tremendous lowing warned him that some wild cattle were nearer to him than he could have wished ; and, on looking round, he saw a herd of from one to two hundred drawn up midway between himself and a patch of thick forest-land. They showed by every possible sign that they were excited and angry ; probably they had just emerged from the forest for their evening drink, and were enraged at finding the shallow already occupied.

Young was well mounted, and had a loaded rifle in a sling ; and as there seemed still plenty of time for him to

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de along the bank and be out of the way before the cattle could reach him, he troubled himself very little. He talked his horse on to the bank, turned his head upstream, and gave him the spur. But the instant the animal plunged forward, the wild cattle made a sharp "right turn," and, headed by five old bulls, began to gallop furiously along a line that at first seemed parallel to the one which he was following, but which soon proved to be one that eventually would strike the river at a very sharp angle.

As the prospect seemed so unpleasant, Young rapidly turned his horse and set off the opposite way, for he had suddenly remembered that, lower down, there was a fordable part of the river where his horse could cross with ease, and where the cattle probably would not follow him. But if the cattle could not reverse their direction as quickly as he, they could at least come up with him by other means. At the end of the long file was a rear-guard of half a dozen bulls, and these, detaching themselves from the herd, turned and ran straight across at him, tails up and horns down, ready for any amount of mischief.

"We must swim across instead of walking, that's all," Young muttered to his horse, and put him straight at the water. But even as the animal leapt, the horns of the first bull were at his very fetlocks; and Young, who was freeing his feet from the stirrups, drawing his knees as high up as possible, and at the same time turning to look at his pursuer, suddenly lost his balance and slid off the back of the terrified horse.

To swim across a river less than fifty yards wide, when not encumbered by clothes, is to the average man a

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pleasure rather than a feat, if the weather is agreeable ; but no man ever found thick riding-breeches, top-boots with spurs, a heavy flannel shirt, and a jacket whose pockets did duty for a travelling-bag, very great aids to swimming. And Young had three additional things to think about : could and would the bulls follow him ? could he catch his horse ? were there any alligators or river-serpents about ?

The last consideration made him half-determined to go back and face the herd ; indeed, he cast a look over his shoulder at them ; but one bull was standing with his fore-feet in the water and bellowing with rage, while three more were immediately behind him, so that there was no great encouragement to return. Looking in front again, he saw that his horse was swimming in almost a straight line for the opposite bank, and a good ten yards ahead of him. Young took a few strokes, but the result was miserably poor ; the gun had worked round in his fall, and was constantly getting in the way of his hands, while his feet seemed as though they were weighted with lead. Making what little progress he could, he bethought him of doing what he might have done before—calling to the horse. At the sound of his voice the faithful beast turned his head, and though, on realizing that the bulls were still there, he refused to come back, he waited for his master, patiently treading the water ; and Young, weary and breathless, at last reached the saddle, and after a good deal of difficulty dragged himself astride again, and was soon safely landed on the further bank.

It was with a peculiar relish that Mr. Young learned, a few days later, that a large body of Indians were about to set out in chase of this or a similar herd, for he felt



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that he owed the animals a grudge ; and, with half a dozen other Englishmen, he eagerly accompanied the tribe.

As regards quantity, the hunt was disappointing, for only six cows were taken after all ; still, it offered considerable sport, as well as affording yet another instance of the ingenuity and perseverance which man brings to bear in his efforts to slay or subdue the wild beasts in his vicinity.

The nearest approach to a herd which the hunters could come upon consisted of two bulls and a dozen cows. The bulls, contrary to custom, soon deserted their charges and fled from the open grass-land, where they had been feeding, into the forest, followed by six of the cows. Half the Indians went in pursuit, but the hunted animals managed to outwit them, and succeeded in escaping to a thicket where the horses could only follow with much risk and difficulty.

Meanwhile the other section of the riders ran down and surrounded the remaining cows. The coolness of the Indians was extraordinary. On three different occasions Young would confidently have prophesied that one of their number would be unhorsed and gored by a frantic cow that was charging straight at him ; but each time the loop of the lasso was dexterously dropped over her horns, and horse and rider were out of her way in an instant, while, pulled up by the unexpected jerk, she fell heavily to the ground. Snorting and kicking, the animal would struggle to her feet again, and make a second desperate onslaught, with the same result as before ; the Indian's horse sprang away as lightly as a mountain-goat, and the headlong charge was spent on nothing.

At last, exhausted and brow-beaten, the cows aban-



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doned their more violent struggles ; then the lassos were hauled in a few yards, and immediately those horsemen who were not otherwise engaged closed in on the captives, and their horses, well used to such an occupation, pushed and hustled them forward till they followed their new masters with due meekness.

Mr. Young has also much to tell us concerning the taking and breaking of the Central American horse. Wild horses traverse the American plains from Patagonia as far north as Southern Canada, though they are probably most plentiful in Texas, Mexico, and Central America. Mr. Young's account of the Indian method of taming these useful animals after they have been lassoed is full of interest.

He followed some natives who were forcing a small batch of captives towards a large shallow pool near the British settlement at Black River. When they had reached the water-edge, the Indians tied up the horses to trees, with the exception of those on which they were ready to operate, and, to each of these, two men were told off as breakers. When he had fastened a very long halter to his horse, one of the Indians removed the lasso, and with a few blows and shouts forced the frightened creature into about three and a half feet of water. Then, while the wondering animal stood plunging and trembling, the second Indian took a run from the bank, just like a boy playing leap-frog, vaulted over the horse's buttocks, and fell astride of him.

This was where the excitement began. It is impossible to conceive fully what a horse feels like when he is mounted for the first time, but any reader who has seen a colt

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broken in to saddle can form some idea. No two of these particular creatures seemed to act quite in the same manner : one went down on his knees, a second jibbed and tried to bite his rider's foot, a third bucked, a fourth reared, and a fifth nearly succeeded in fastening his teeth in the thigh of the next horse's rider. But the Indians were calm and phlegmatic as ever ; even one who was pitched over his horse's head into the water was up again, and had vaulted sideways on to the animal's back once more, within a minute.

The struggles were painfully futile ; the Indians only waited to take breath and establish themselves firmly ; then each man seized his horse's mane with the left hand, and with the right so mercilessly boxed and buffeted both sides of the poor brute's head that Young, who had long tried to preach kindness towards horses among the Indians, felt strongly inclined to lay his riding-whip over the shoulders of the nearest man. The buffeting went on till each horse stood stock still, and was hauled back to the bank, where he sank down spiritless and trembling.

It is greatly to be feared that this cruelty of the Indians is less natural to them than acquired from the Spaniards and Portuguese ; and it is a big feather in our national cap that celebrated travellers, of various nations, have put it on record that Englishmen are the only people who know how to treat a horse ; for the less said of the Arab's love for his steed, the better. Darwin, while in South America, was riding a jaded horse borrowed of a Spanish farmer ; one that had but recently been broken in from his wild state. " Spur him," cried the owner. " No ; he's done up," was the reply. " Never mind, he's *my*

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horse," said this humane being, who could not understand that the Englishman's consideration was for the animal, and not for the owner.

Charles Darwin's reputation as a scientist so eclipses other sides of his life that we are apt to forget that he was a much travelled man. His wanderings often enabled him to make valuable observations where wild beasts were concerned, and more than once they brought him into close touch with the wild horse. While he was staying in Chile a large herd of them was lassoed, and driven into a huge circular compound. When the time for breaking-in came, a few Gaucho *domidors*, or tamers, appeared, each armed with a lasso.

If Darwin was surprised when he first saw a cow or horse captured by this simple instrument, he was still more so when, with the utmost coolness, each *domidor* singled out a likely looking animal from among the frightened heard—which at the men's approach had begun to wildly run round and round the compound—and threw the loop with seeming carelessness, not at the head, but the fore-feet of the animal of his choice. In each case both feet were caught in the noose, which was at once pulled tight, and the horse fell sideways to the ground. In an instant the *domidor* had run round the beast in such a manner as to catch one of the hind-legs with the taut thong of the lasso, and now he dragged this towards the other two limbs, and hitched it so that all three were bound together.

His next proceeding was to unfasten a bridle which he had hung over his shoulders, and to fit this to the horse's mouth, not by means of a bit, but by fastening the ends of it to a slender thong, which he now wound round and

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round the beast's lower jaw, thus binding tongue and jaw together. Then he tied the fore-legs together with a second thong in such a manner that the knot could be unfastened with a single jerk of the longer end ; and this being done to his satisfaction, he removed the lasso that bound the three legs together.

Naturally the horse sprang up immediately, but finding himself so tightly hobbled, lost his balance and fell over again. With some urging he was soon persuaded to rise once more, and a second Gaucho proceeded to saddle and girth him while the *domidor* held his head. By this time the unfortunate beast was half paralyzed by fear, and stood shuddering, sweating and foaming for a moment, then rolled over again on his side.

Full of wonderment as to how the *domidor* proposed even to mount, let alone ride, a colt that could only lie trembling and refusing to rise, Darwin came nearer, expecting every minute to see the hind-hoofs shoot out at one of the Gauchos who was similarly engaged with another horse close at hand.

Then he noticed that in one hand the *domidor* held the bridle, and in the other the long end of the thong that bound the fore-feet. Now, standing straddle-legged over the prostrate body, the Gaucho stooped till his thighs almost touched the near flap of the saddle, gave a sudden jerk with the thong, and instantly the slip-knot came undone, and the horse's legs were free.

The beautiful creature rose like a bird, and Darwin expected to see the *domidor* fly like a stone from a catapult ; but in an instant his knees were in the horse's sides, the stirrups seemed of themselves to slide over his toes, and horse and rider were bounding out of the compound

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and across the pampas at a mad gallop. The horse had been the loser in the conflict; in less than half an hour he came back, panting and dejected; and, after one or two similar trials, was completely subdued, and resigned to the servitude which henceforth must be his lot.



## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE MONKEYS OF THE NEW WORLD

About American monkeys.—Lieutenant Herndon, U.S.N.—Howling monkeys.—Up the Amazon.—A disturbed supper.—The howling increased.—A rash resolution.—Firing on the howlers.—Saluting the rising sun.—Stewed monkey.—Lieutenant Gibbon, U.S.N.—The sapajous and the sakis.—Sleeping in treed hammocks.—The robbery of the honey.—The robbers robbed.—The “festive” parrot.—Fight between parrot and monkey.—Another spider-monkey to the rescue.—The cause of the squabble.

BETWEEN the monkeys of the Eastern and those of the Western Hemisphere we must draw as sharp a distinction as that which exists between the buffalo and the bison, or the tiger and the jaguar. For there are differences in structure, marking, size, and character, that at times would almost persuade us that the Old World and the New World quadrumana are two separate genera altogether.

Neglecting lemurs, the American monkeys are of two sorts : those whose tails are prehensile, and act, to all intents and purposes, as a fifth limb ; and those to whom the tail is only an ornament, or at best a warm coverlet which they can wrap round themselves while they sleep. The anthropoid ape and the baboon are unknown ; all

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the monkeys are of comparatively small stature and light build.

Probably the best known of the South American monkeys is the howler. The name is not pretty or complimentary, but he has brought it on himself by the abominable noise which he creates—a noise which, Humboldt tells us, can be heard more than a mile away. Lieutenant Herndon, U.S.N., of the Herndon-Gibbon Amazon exploring expedition, likens the sound made by a company of these animals to that of a procession of wagons with ungreased axles ; and the frequency with which he was forced into a close acquaintance with the howlers certainly qualified him to speak authoritatively on the subject.

After he and Lieutenant Gibbon had temporarily separated, he set off up the river in a canoe rowed by Indians whose dialect he happened to speak and understand tolerably well. He could scarcely have chosen a much better means of becoming acquainted with the South American quadrumana, for, as the canoe shot along beneath the overhanging boughs, marmosets and ring-tails, coatis and spider-monkeys, peered down at the occupants, or, with excited chatter, sprang forward from tree to tree, keeping pace with the travellers, and evincing as much interest as so many boys following a boat-race along a tow-path.

Late in the afternoon of the first day, Herndon told his men to pull in, deciding that the night would be more comfortable if passed lying on the bank than if spent huddled in the canoe. He had a reasonable quantity of dried provisions with him, but these he wished to harbour against a rainy day ; and, as small game seemed

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entiful, he told the Indians to light a fire while he procured supper.

While he was giving these directions a small herd of deer ran lightly down a forest road which lay parallel to the bank, and some of the Indians had brought down a couple of them with their arrows long before he could get his gun to his shoulder. The deer had been fetched, skinned and quartered, and were over the fire, when, just as the sun sank, there arose, from the trees above, the most appalling noise imaginable—the yelling or roaring of a company of about forty howlers.

“*Araguato !*” whispered the Indians, and every man of them fitted an arrow to his bow. This was Herndon’s first experience of the creatures, though he had heard much about them from the natives. While these were peering upwards through the dusky boughs, trying to single out marks for their arrows, the lieutenant picked up his gun, which was loaded with small shot, and fired obliquely into the tree. The effect of the shot was amazing. In the first place, the Indians shrieked, or fell down, or fled, in their astonishment, for not one had ever seen a gun fired before ; secondly, not a single monkey dropped, although the American was not a man to miss his aim, and had had at least one of the red-brown bodies well covered by his gun. Further, instead of quieting the uproar, the report seemed to have had the effect of multiplying it by a thousand. True, the noise immediately overhead ceased, for, as Herndon could see by the firelight, the monkeys were betaking themselves, by means of acrobatic swings, in which tails, legs, and teeth all seemed to bear a share, to the next tree ; but from the top of this, where already a couple of dozen of the noisy

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creatures were collected, and apparently from every other tree in the forest, the grating, drumming pandemonium was beginning again in full force. Herndon had been told that a man may soon get used to this tumult ; but for a few minutes he felt as though it would drive him out of his mind, and he savagely longed to slay every araguato in the whole forest. The hollow resonance of this howling, it should be explained, is due to the peculiar formation of a bone at the back of the mouth, which spreads itself into a sort of sounding-board or drum-head.

For a long while the Indians were too excited by the gun-shot to be able to enter into explanations or to reply to questions ; but at length Herndon gathered that, by his hasty shot, he had deprived his followers of their most coveted meal—stewed monkey—and that if he had ignored the noise it would probably have died down soon. As it was, the animals having been disturbed, it might last all night.

Heedless of this last implied reproof, Herndon ate his supper, vowing that if the monkeys did not soon stop he would “ give them something to howl for.”

The Indians ate their meal almost in silence, for some were sulky at the loss of their monkey-diet, and others were still awed by the gun, from the neighbourhood of which every one edged away nervously. Complete darkness came on, but the howling did not abate. Herndon had gradually been working himself up to that pitch of fury which a very tired man reaches when his slumbers are broken by the midnight cat, until he is ready in his exasperation to throw his watch or his best hat out of the window ; so the lieutenant rashly swore that he would



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op the clamour if he had to spend a pound of gunpowder on the serenaders.

Accordingly he began his fusillade, the Indians standing by, wondering and trembling ; but by the time he had sent a dozen charges into the dark trees, and doubled the howling thereby, the explorer had begun to laugh at himself for his silly exhibition of temper ; and once more throwing himself down by the fire, he fell into a series of fitful dozes, in the intervals of which he could still hear his tormentors.

By a little before sunrise the Indians were stirring ; the noise had died away, and Herndon sank into the first real sleep he had known all night ; but, all too soon, this was broken in upon by a repetition of the howling chorus : another company of monkeys had appeared in the tree overhead, and were paying their respects to the rising sun.

“ This is the best time to kill them,” said one of the Indians, as his master sat down to breakfast disgustedly.

“ Go on ; kill away ; the more the merrier,” snapped Herndon.

Each man took up a favourable position, with bow ready drawn ; their chief gave a signalling click with his tongue, and nine arrows sped simultaneously into the branches. The cries above became more shrill, and as he looked upwards, the explorer could see that, of a family of about twenty, half a dozen were falling from the effect of the arrows, and the rest were making a hurried escape by swinging from tree to tree. The lieutenant rose, anxious to count the dead and examine one of them ; but only one animal dropped. It was a good-sized beast, three



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feet long, with an immense tail, large hands and feet, and a formidable beard.

“Ten men to shoot one monkey,” said Herndon, jeering good-humouredly. “By the way, I must have spread a few over the ground last night.”

The chief smiled in a superior manner, and pointed into the tree ; and there the lieutenant saw five more of the monkeys, dead, and hanging by their tails.

“How are you going to get them ?” he asked.

The tree was slender, and easy of ascent, and one of the Indians answered the question by swarming up it, the rest standing by with drawn bows ready to intercept any jaguar or boa-constrictor that might be waiting to attack the climber.

“Sometimes we cut the tree right down,” explained the chief of the Indians. The araguato, when falling, more often than not instinctively hooks his tail round a branch, just as we should clutch with our hands. Later, as they passed down to the water again, Herndon saw two or three of them thus hanging from other trees, and rightly assumed that they were some of those on which he had vented his ill-humour the night before.

The much-vaunted monkey-flesh, whether roasted or stewed, turned out to be very tasteless and unappetizing to the white man’s palate ; the muscles were singularly dry, there was but little fat on the bodies, and also the white man had an uncomfortable feeling that, in tasting the meat, he was guilty of a sort of cannibalism. He passed many thousands of howlers before his journey was ended, but he never again sought to enjoin silence upon them ; and, naturally enough, he soon grew accustomed to their noise.

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While Herndon was thus seeing life among the arachnids, his colleague in the expedition, Lieutenant Gibbon, was exploring a tributary of the Amazon, under the guidance of some Yuracares Indians ; and in course of time he made acquaintance, not only with the howlers, but with the spider-monkey, various sapajous, sakis, marmosets, and the like.

Mr. Gibbon soon found ample scope for watching the struggle for existence among Nature's wild children here. Scarcely a day passed without his witnessing an attack on a monkey family by a jaguar, or a fight between a monkey and a parrot, or else a skilfully planned raid by an army of larger monkeys on a village of smaller ones.

The latter form of diversion was a great favourite among the sapajous—curious-looking bearded creatures, with tufts of hair, exactly like elementary horns, close to their eyes. Like their brethren, they are fond of wild honey, and Gibbon often saw them smacking their lips over this delicacy, but never could understand how they became possessed of it.

While he and his Indians were in the forest they generally slept in hammocks hung by very long fibre ropes from the trees, and thus the lieutenant often had a splendid view of what was going on above him in the early hours of the day. One morning, soon after sunrise, a little procession of sakis—small bearded monkeys with intensely human faces—made a sudden descent on the fork of a tree next the one to which Gibbon's hammock was slung, and the next moment a small swarm of angry bees were buzzing round the heads of the visitors. With quaint little chuckles of delight, and regardless of the storm they had created, the monkeys pushed their hands into a hollow

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in the tree-fork where the bees' nest was, and began gleefully to draw forth lumps of the sticky prize. Beyond placing one arm over their faces to guard their eyes, the little robbers took no precautions against attack from the bees; and, having got what they came for, the small company skipped blithely on to Gibbon's tree, and at sight of him leapt hurriedly to the upper branches, where they might eat their breakfast in safety.

This was the first time the young American had seen this variety of monkey eating honey, and he was rapidly working out a small calculation of probabilities in his head, when a rustling in the topmost branches announced the presence of fresh arrivals; and in another moment a dozen sapajous, beasts much larger and stronger than the sakis, swooped down on the devourers of honey, and, snatching from them their ill-gotten gain, put them to flight, and coolly sat down to finish their breakfast for them. After that, Gibbon had no need to wonder how the sapajou gets his honey.

While occupying these airy and somewhat unsafe lodgings, the lieutenant occasionally noticed a beautiful and very large green parrot, which is generally known as the "festive" parrot (*Psittacus festivus*); and one morning he was awakened by the harsh, raucous cry of one of these birds. High up in the tree, the parrot was seeking to combat the attentions of a spider-monkey that, balancing himself with his tail and one hand, had still three hands left to do mischief with. For the "spider" is particularly clever in the use of his tail, and the explorer often saw him travelling solely by means of it and one hand, while he ate with another, and picked fruit or caught birds or flies with a third.



### ROBBERY WITH VIOLENCE

The spider monkey of the Amazons delights, partly from mischief and vanity, and partly from a desire to suck the oil from the quills, to tear out the tail or wing feathers of the parrot.





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Gibbon had many times seen these animals catch and eat small birds, but the festive parrot was almost as big as the monkey, and looked far more likely to take a meal than to provide one. The monkey shot out one arm, and immediately drew it back writhing, as Polly gave it a sharp blow with her beak. But in a moment he brought a second hand into play, and the bird, instead of flying away, flapped with her wings, and only hopped to a slightly higher bough, where she perched screaming defiance at the monkey.

But with a pertinacity "worthy of a better cause," the spider swung himself almost to the parrot's level, and, this time more cautiously, made a snatch at the bird, drawing back the hand swiftly as the enraged creature again struck at it with her beak. Thus hopping backwards and forwards from bough to bough, the combatants continued their struggle, neither "scoring" appreciably. At last, however, an unexpected reinforcement came, in the form of a second spider, that, with a giggle of delight, prepared to take a hand in the fray. He was soon at the back of the parrot, and she thus found herself between two fires, yet was too obstinate or too dense to employ the means of safety that Nature had provided her with.

But very soon the double attack began to prove too much for her, and at last, giving up the game, she rose from her perch. The second monkey, however, rose with her; springing upwards, he shot out one hand just as the parrot was rising on the wing; there was an ear-splitting screech, and then the bird flew away, leaving the greater part of her tail-feathers in the spider's hand. Immediately a contest arose between the two monkeys for

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possession of the prize, but the holder of it was too strong for the other, and, with a vicious bite, sent him about his business.

The mystery was now explained. The first monkey's idea in persecuting the bird was not murder, but robbery with violence, aggravated by mutilation. Partly from mischief, partly from vanity, but mainly from a desire to suck the oily substance from the soft portion of the quills, he had been struggling all this time for possession of the bird's tail or wing feathers ; and now the second and victorious beast sat down contentedly to chew and suck his spoils, and subsequently to tear them in pieces, and sit grinning as the wind blew away the downy particles.

## CHAPTER XXV

### ADVENTURES AMONG WILD BEASTS OF THE PRAIRIES AND BACKWOODS

A home of adventure.—John Frémont.—The bison, and its disappearance.—How to rid a country of its wild animals.—Stopped by a herd of bisons.—An awful chase in the forest.—Trying to check the pursuit.—Where is the path?—The path already occupied.—Between two forces of bisons.—Indians to the rescue.—The cause of the trouble.—An unsportsmanlike method.—Trading for bison-meat.—A useful beast.—The beaver.—Trapping him.—A mystery.—“Where’s the bait?”—“Bark-stone.”—A beaver that punishes trappers.—*Castoreum*.—The cawquaw, or American porcupine.—A bad time for the dog.—A remarkable beast.—The opossum.—Mr. P. H. Gosse.—A beast that “shams dead.”—The ‘possum-hunt.—The victorious negro.

WHEN we remember the tremendous expanse of desert and forest land that the railway contractors, builders, and agriculturists have still left untouched in North America, we are not surprised at the prevalence of wild beasts in that part of the Western world. In spite of the energies of the fur-trader, the bear and fox and wolf still lurk in the backwoods or roam over the prairies, with the ‘possum, ‘coon, puma, and a host of other interesting or savage creatures. What wonder, then, that the life of trappers and travellers among such surroundings is often one long tale of adventure, excitement, and peril?

## ADVENTURES AMONG WILD BEASTS

John Frémont, whose followers' adventures among the bears have been already related, was many times constrained to kill the bison, not only in self-defence, but for food, and some of his experiences with this formidable prairie-bull are worth retelling. It is but sixty years since Frémont made his celebrated exploring journey, and at that time he saw literally millions of bisons in the course of a year or so ; even as recently as the American Civil War thousands of herds might be found on the prairies ; but the twentieth-century Yankee only knows the animal from seeing him in a show. To beat up a herd of even a hundred bisons nowadays would probably take two or three years. Trade, as usual, was at the bottom of this appalling destruction. After the war, "buffalo-robes" suddenly became valuable articles of commerce, and the poor bison had to furnish them.

But we may gather from Frémont's reminiscences that a portion of this ruthless slaughter should lie on the consciences of the early settlers, of the Indian tribes, and even of travellers like himself. "Lightly come, lightly go," invariably applies to the provision-stock of uncivilized men, and sometimes of the civilized ; and one feels angry to think of the unsportsmanlike killing, and senseless waste of good food, so continually witnessed among those who have *carte blanche* with the wild creatures, fish, flesh, or fowl, of their district. Scores of times Frémont saw Indians kill ten times as many bisons as they could possibly use ; often an animal was shot down just for the sake of the meat on his raised withers or "hump," the rest of the carcass being left to feed the wolves. His own men were sometimes no better ; for, though they often felt the pinch of hunger, they would

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lay fast and loose with the bison when opportunity occurred.

The animal is inoffensive enough if left alone, but seeing that he can sometimes put even the grisly to flight, he is not a safe beast to provoke. Frémont and one of his men were once riding in pursuit of a buck, when a sharp turn of the forest path brought them into a large natural clearing. Across this the buck fled at full speed, and Frémont, still at a gallop, fired, but missed his aim. His companion raised his gun, but the deer had reached the bushes on the far side of the clearing before the hammer fell, and the bullet struck the forehead of one of a herd of a couple of hundred bisons that had plunged from among the trees at the sound of the first shot. Before either man could think of reloading, the bisons charged at them with furious bellowings. To get back to the trees was easy enough ; not so easy to reach the path by which they had come ; and to attempt on horseback to penetrate any other part of the wood was to court a broken head or neck, as well as to offer a target to the bulls, which, of course, could thread their way among the trunks far more readily than ridden horses. The easiest mode of escape was to spur for the trees, swing themselves into the first that came handy, turn the horses loose, and wait till the baffled herd retired. But the expedition was already very short of horses, and these would assuredly either flee or be killed ; and the two men had travelled many miles from the main body, and were not disposed to cover the return journey on foot.

Frémont turned back and rode straight at the nearest point of woodland ; but his companion, who was better



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mounted and more favourably situated, urged his horse back to the path, and, reaching it before the foremost bisons could cut him off, was quite safe from fear of being overtaken. Meanwhile the leader of the expedition, chased by a large proportion of the herd, had reached the trees, and was making frantic efforts to drive his frightened horse along a rough cross-line that should at length run into the main path. After the first twenty yards, the beast seemed to regain confidence, and to the rider's delight, he found that the bushes and tree-growths were not so thick as he had anticipated. But if the way was thus made unexpectedly easy to Frémont, the bulls could profit by it just as readily as he ; and he saw, on looking back, that more than a score of his pursuers were within six yards of him, and of these, one was but a length away.

In his holster he carried a large horse-pistol which happened to be loaded with ball, and with this he fired at the nearest bison. The animal fell with a tremendous roar, and the next comer, unable to stop himself, tumbled headlong over the body of his fallen comrade. The start thus gained was not difficult to keep, for every moment the trees grew more sparse ; and, no matter how much the path that he was making for wound away, the fugitive was sure to reach it before very long.

The hoofs still crunched and thundered behind him, showing that the angry beasts were not to be balked of their revenge, but Frémont cared little for them now ; let him once get to the path, and they might catch him if they could. Just then a gun went off, about a hundred yards on his right front ; presumably his companion had seen his predicament from the distance, and, safe himself,



### CHASED BY BISON

Frémont made for the path which wound amongst the trees, while the herd thundered at his heels. With a horse pistol he shot the leader, which fell with a loud bellow, while the one behind fell headlong over him.



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was rendering him what help he could. But no bullet whistled anywhere near, and no bison fell. Frémont glanced back once more ; he had gained a good ten yards. Now one big effort, and he was saved.

Again came a gun-shot, from the same quarter as before, and at last Frémont became aware of the cause of the firing. He had come in sight of the path ; but this path, as he knew, was an old bison-track, worn by the feet of countless thousands of the animals in their migrations north or south ; and now, to his utter amazement and horror, he perceived that it was once more in the possession of its lawful owners. The bulk of the herd had, then, pursued his friend, had given up the chase, and now were proceeding at a sullen walk in the direction which their quarry had taken ; butting their neighbours snappishly, or suspiciously turning their heads to either side, as though on the look-out for a concealed enemy.

But Frémont did not lose his head. Swiftly he made his horse wheel ever so little to the right, and started on a course that must soon lead him to where his friend had been taking pot-shots at the distant animals. This would have been all very well had his horse been able to move in dead silence ; but the hoofs betrayed him, and all too soon the rider found himself between two powerful forces, which were rapidly converging towards a particular point—himself.

His horse was now breathless and almost knocked up, but if he could turn back and make one more spurt, along a line that would halve the angle which the two companies of bisons were trying to make between them, he might yet be saved. Frémont accordingly pulled up short, and just as he was swinging the animal round, a

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most deafening discord of yells rose from the quarter to which he intended returning, accompanied by the quick rattle of a number of horse-hoofs. Dark moving figures dodged and glanced among the trees, and the shouting increased in volume ; then suddenly Frémont felt as if a red-hot iron had been thrust against the side of his shin. A flight of Indian arrows had been launched, and one of these, pitched low, had picered the stout leather of his moccasin, and penetrated an inch into the flesh. For this he cared little ; for the bisons had abandoned the pursuit, and were concerned with their own safety.

He reined up, and a party of mounted redskins shot past him like a shadow, whooping and yelling, and seeming to care as little for the trees as if they had not been there. Once more Frémont turned his horse and rode straight over to the path, his ears still deafened by the combined shouts of the Indians and the bellowing of the fleeing herd.

Not far down the path he saw his companion, who, at sight of him, beckoned eagerly, and then cantered away after the Indians. Frémont followed more slowly, and as he did so he began to "put two and two together." He remembered that, when they first saw the buck, they had been passing near a high gravel cliff, and, as he knew a good deal about Indian methods of hunting, he now came to the conclusion that the herd which he and his companions had suddenly come upon had been run down by the redskins, who had all along been steadily driving them towards the precipice.

The shouts still did not abate, and after he had ridden nearly a couple of miles, Frémont found that every step was now taking him nearer to the noise ; and as he



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merged into the clearing where the gravel cliff was, it welled into a savage roar of triumph. The Indians had somehow collected the herd again, and, pressing hard on their track, had so terrified and bewildered them that they had forced them to the very brink of the precipice. The first two or three ranks made no attempt to stop themselves, but fell headlong down, and the remainder were soon obliged to follow them, not daring to turn on so multitudinous and noisy a band of persecutors.

When Frémont came up he found his friend busily bargaining with the Indian chief for the delivery, at the explorer's camp, of a large quantity of the beef thus cheaply acquired ; and by this means the travellers procured many carcasses instead of the buck which they had lost, and the redskins cheerfully allowed themselves to be sold below market-price in atonement for Frémont's wound. To them the bison was what the seal is to the Eskimo, though, as usual, they had slain more than twice as many animals as they needed. Among them every part of a beast had its use—the flesh for preserving ; the hide for leather ; the bones for clubs and musical instruments ; the horns for spoons and spear-heads ; the sinews for bow-strings ; the hoofs for glue used in making their arrows ; and the longer hair for ropes. When to these we add the tallow from the carcasses—each would yield about a hundredweight—we can see what a valuable beast has been lost to America through the sapient practice of killing the goose that lays the golden eggs.

The American beaver's case is just the opposite of the bison's ; he was at one time perilously near extinction because his skin was required for the purpose of hat-

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making ; but, as we no longer wear beaver hats, the modern trapper has largely ceased to persecute him. The extent to which the slaughter of the clever little beast was carried by the older fur-traders is shown by the fact that a beaver-skin was at one time the unit of value in Canada.

John Keast Lord, the celebrated army veterinary surgeon and naturalist, saw many hundreds of beavers caught while he was on his journey from Canada into the States ; and he also took careful note of the clever system of building and engineering for which these wonderful animals are justly celebrated. About their building, there is little that is new to the modern reader. In brief, the beaver's purpose in dam-building is to protect himself against the wolves, lynxes, wolverines, etc. As long as the water is up to the level of the entry of his house, he is safe, but drought or frost may easily cut off the regular supply of water from the river or lake where his colony is ; and to guard against this, he builds a dam which will ensure a permanently equable depth of water.

Lord was learned in most forms of traps and gins, having been a trapper himself in Canada ; but at first he was at a loss to understand the method by which the Yankee backwoodsmen secured the beavers. One day he accompanied an old trapper on his rounds, and the mystery was explained. The first gin they came to was tenanted by a young beaver ; a tap on the head put an end to the poor little thing, and then trap and beaver were pulled up together. There was nothing remarkable about the trap or its position ; it was not particularly close to any "lodge," and it had been set a good six inches under water. There was no sign of any bait having been laid,

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ough a slender twig protruded, as if by accident, from joint of the trap.

"But where's your bait?" asked Lord, as the trapper bowed away his prize, and moved on to set the trap a little farther along the bank.

The American produced a little bottle tightly corked. Here," he said.

Lord took the phial, unstoppered it, and smelt the contents. From his knowledge of drugs he at once recognized the scent.

"Phew! It's castoreum. What an artful dodge! You fellows beat us hollow."

"You can call it what you like," was the reply. "*We* call it bark-stone, and I don't know nothing else as 'll catch 'em. As it is, the old ones are mostly up to the trick."

"But what is the trick?"

"See here." The trapper pulled up at a likely spot, and reopened the trap, throwing away the twig that had been wedged in it. Then he plucked a twig of similar thickness from a bush, and broke it off to a length of rather less than a foot. One end of this he chewed till its fibres separated brush-like, then dipped that end into the bottle; the other end he hitched in the trap perpendicular to it, and at last carefully lowered the trap, making fast about half a foot below the surface of the water.

"Can you see the bait now?" he asked, pointing to the few inches of twig that protruded above water. "As soon as they smell that they're sure to come nosing round, and it's odds if at least a young un don't get caught. Let's go on to the next trap."

They did, and the trapper waxed abusive of beavers in general, and elderly and artful ones in particular.

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“Just look at that, now,” he said, pointing disgustedly to the spot where a beaver should have been, and where, instead, a neat mound of earth, twigs, mud, and stones was raised, as though in memory of the departed animal. “The old uns are that cute, they seem to do it out of aggravation.”

In the end, out of fifty traps inspected, forty were tenanted, but the other ten had been thus ignominiously treated. It would seem that the intelligence of many old beavers leads them to warn their weaker brethren of danger, and, on coming upon one of the baits, they at once do all they can to destroy or bury the snare. This mysterious bait is derived from the bark-stone (or *castoreum*, as the druggist calls it), secreted in the body of the beaver; it has a peculiarly pungent smell, which appears to be very agreeable to the animals, many of which risk and sacrifice their lives for the sake of being near it.

Returning into Canada from this eventful journey, Mr. Lord also had dealings with another animal of the backwoods—the cawquaw, or American porcupine; and his efforts to secure a living specimen were not particularly successful. This creature bears but little apparent resemblance to the porcupine that is found in the South and East. Lord was introduced to the gentleman by a young wild dog which he was endeavouring to capture, and which he had stalked for a couple of miles, armed with a bit of meat and a lasso. The dog stopped suddenly, and made a point at an animal considerably bigger than himself, that in the distance looked like a very large wolverene. Lord stole gently forward, and hid behind a tree. The dog yapped and sniffed, but was careful to



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keep away from the stranger's teeth ; but suddenly the unknown animal's hair stood on end, and he lashed out furiously with his tail as the dog barked behind him.

The poor pup blinked and sneezed, then set up a furious wailing cry, and tore off out of sight as if maddened with pain. Lord sent a charge of shot into the stranger, finding that he could not get near enough toasso him, and then went over to make a post-mortem. The " hair " that had so easily erected itself was mainly bristle, and the murderous nine-inch tail looked like a strip of hedgehog skin. Lord afterwards found that the cawquaw is a terror to the most vicious wolf, and not much less (though for a different reason) to the forest-owner. There is no beast in the world—not even the beaver—that is so destructive to the trees. One cawquaw will ruin a couple of acres of forest-land in a year, by the simple process of climbing to the top of a tree, and gradually peeling off and eating the bark, working his way steadily downwards till he has spoiled one tree, and then going on to another.

A typical American animal, and an alarmingly destructive one, is the opossum, a beast the size of a domestic cat, and combining in himself the worst vices of cat, fox, bat, and monkey. To zoologists it is of special interest as belonging to a family rarely seen except in Australia—the pouched animals. The late Mr. Philip Henry Gosse, F.R.S., gives an amusing account of the tricks and depredations of this marsupial, and of the negro method of hunting him.

Mr. Gosse was staying in the Georgian backwoods with Major Kendrick, an old amateur backwoodsman who had



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established quite a little settlement there, and to whose poultry the neighbouring 'possums were a perpetual pest. Not an egg, not a young bird, was secure from them ; and the Major's fruit-trees and melon-patch were continually devastated by them.

The cunning of the fox is even surpassed by that of the 'possum ; yet these beasts were not particularly difficult to trap, and when trapped, the negro servants made a hearty meal of them, pronouncing them as tender as sucking-pig. But what is the use of traps against animals that produce litters of ten and fifteen at a time ?

Mr. Gosse came upon a 'possum one evening in the poultry-yard, and as he drove the beast into a corner, it dropped, and lay to all appearances quite dead, just as the fox will do, "only more so." The Englishman, knowing the creature's artfulness, rewarded it with a hearty kick that sent it over the palings ; the opossum opened one eye, saw that he was unpursued, then calmly picked himself up and walked off. It is said that the animal will " 'possum " or " sham dead " for half an hour at a stretch ; and, after having received kicks and blows enough to turn sham into reality with a much larger beast, will yet jump up and run away the first moment the chance offers.

One evening Major Kendrick called his guest, to warn him of a 'possum-hunt which the negroes were planning, and Mr. Gosse hastened to join it. While the blacks were lighting their pine-torches, excited barks came from the melon-patch outside the farmyard ; the dogs had started the game of themselves. Every one rushed to the spot, and arrived in time to see a 'possum dodge from a couple of dogs, and disappear like a squirrel up a tree.

Torches were at once brought, and their light showed

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The criminal airily seated on a low bough, just irritatingly out of reach of the dogs, holding on by his claws and monkey-like tail, and leering down at his persecutors as enough to remind them that their own claws were never made for climbing. The dogs were barking themselves hoarse, when a negro, surrendering his torch to a mate, set to work to climb the tree.

The moment the opossum saw this, he sprang to the next branch with the agility of a spider-monkey, and, had another tree been near enough, would perhaps have escaped altogether. As it was, the higher the negro climbed, the more the 'possum mounted, till he was up aloft on the smallest twigs, where no man would dare venture. But the black was not at the end of his resources. Having climbed as high as he could, he shook the tree vigorously ; the 'possum held like wax : he shook it again ; the beast swayed and wavered, but still hung on. This went on for some minutes ; then the negro uttered a shout of joy : he had dislodged the enemy. But yet the 'possum was not beaten ; in his fall he managed to twist his tail round a lower transverse branch, and hung there to get breath. But his fate had led him to the end of a bough that had no other underneath it ; the negro slowly descended to the fork, and the shaking had to be begun all over again. And now the 'possum was tired out ; his efforts at keeping his hold grew fainter, and at last he dropped. In a moment a dog had him by the nose, and very soon he was in a condition to be put aside for the victorious negro's supper.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### HUNTING THE WESTERN LION AND TIGER

The puma and the jaguar.—The puma as a dangerous beast.—An unpleasant awakening.—Following the trail of an old puma.—The “painter” in the tree.—A bold trapper.—An accident.—The puma jumps down.—A fight with a “painter” on the ground.—An awful minute.—Gaining ground.—Losing it again.—Rescued by the trapper.—Carrying the mauled man back to camp.—Lieutenant Brand, R.N.—Puma-hunting with dogs.—Using the bolas on the beast.—A pet.—Lassoing the puma on the pampas.—“Taming” him.—Lassoing the jaguar.—Lying in wait for him at night.—Danger of a muzzle-loader.—A narrow escape.—Saved by the Gaucho’s bolas.—How Lieutenant Gibbon shot a jaguar.—The turtle-eater.—Reasons for abandoning the hammock.—A horrible situation.—The Indian to the rescue.—A good shot.

“LION” and “tiger,” in the American sense, must be regarded purely as nicknames — the first for the puma, the second for the jaguar ; for what has been said in a previous chapter concerning the monkey of the Western world applies to most of the other American wild beasts ; taken as a whole, they are smaller and less to be dreaded by man than those of the other hemisphere.

The puma is susceptible of education and moral improvement ; there was a time when, undoubtedly, he killed large numbers of children, to say nothing of an occasional adult ; but, unlike others of his tribe, he has

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earned wisdom by experience, and has so far mended his manners that he has seldom been known to attempt human life within the last forty years, even under provocation, though his energies, where young horses and cattle are concerned, are relatively undiminished. He has gained his name of lion from a resemblance that he is supposed to bear to the young lioness ; he is from four and a half to five feet long, light brown in colour, and can climb like a cat or leap like a tiger. He has been known to spring to a bough twenty feet from the ground. His geographical range is pretty much that of the wild horse ; from mid-north to far south of America.

When Mr. Ruxton, the naturalist, was exploring the Western States in 1845, the puma had not yet fully grasped the fact that civilized man does not tamely allow himself to be attacked and devoured by wild beasts ; and the result was that he formed an important feature in the stirring adventures which the Englishman encountered while sojourning among the trappers in the backwoods. Once Mr. Ruxton was awakened by the crack of a rifle, and, on raising his head, saw a dead puma lying by his side. Made reckless by the scarcity of food, the brute had entered the backwoodsman's camp, and had been in the very act of springing upon the sleeping explorer when a watchful trapper brought him down with a bullet.

On another occasion a puma was seen tracking an Indian girl, and was only shot just in the nick of time by one of Ruxton's red-skinned guides. But the narrowest escape for himself was when he and one of the trappers went in pursuit of an old puma that, no longer equal to the effort of running down horses or deer, divided his

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attentions between lying in wait for human prey and devouring the animals caught in the traps.

Such a neighbour was not to be put up with, and Tim, a young Irish trapper, vowed that he would be the death of him. So, accompanied by Mr. Ruxton, he set out on the beast's trail, which was very soon found by the marks of his claws in the clay ; for this beast "*sharpens his claws*"—*i.e.*, removes frayed particles from the points—by scratching them against the earth, just as a jaguar claws a tree-trunk, or a cat the carpet and the chair-seats.

Starting from this point, the young Irishman led the way as surely as a dog could have done, pointing out to the astonished traveller, as they went along, scores of indications which no inexperienced man would have dreamt of connecting with the recent passage of a puma : indented leaves, bent bushes, broken twigs, flattened grass, and the like ; and, more indisputable still, a depression in the longer grass where the animal had stopped to rest, and that was still almost warm.

But when they had followed the track for nearly a mile past this, the Irishman stopped.

"Look out now," he said warningly ; "he took to a tree here ;" and he pointed to the deeper mark that the hind-claws had made in the moist ground. Both men drew back, and eagerly scanned the branches of the nearest tree ; but at this time of year the foliage was thick, and the wide, leafy boughs would have concealed completely a much larger beast than the "*painter*," as the Americans call the puma ; and though the hunters closely scanned every branch, not a sign of him was to be seen. Yet, when they came to examine



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the ground farther on, there was no track of any kind visible.

"He *must* be here," said the trapper, again looking through the leaves overhead. As he spoke, the leaves stirred, and the attention of both was at once riveted in that direction ; but still they could see nothing.

"The wind, probably," said Ruxton ; "or else a snake."

The trapper did not reply, but turned away to inspect the ground once more, leaving Ruxton still craning his neck to stare into the tree. After a few minutes the Englishman rejoined him. He laid his gun on the ground, took a pistol from his pocket, and stuck it handy in his belt.

"Sure as death, he's there," he said ; "and I'm going to have him down."

He led Ruxton by the shoulder five or six paces away. "You stand there and pot him when I shout. Here ; there's my gun as well, so you'll have two bites. I'm going up the tree."

He unsheathed his hunting-knife and placed it between his teeth, and, with the readiness that comes of long practice, had reached the first fork before the Englishman had recovered from his astonishment at the audacity of the plan. Arrived here, the young trapper relied on his feet to maintain his hold, and, knife in one hand and pistol in the other, scanned the neighbourhood minutely for a few seconds ; then cried out, "Got him ; be ready !"

The next moment the puma, which had been crouching lengthways along the bough above that on which Tim was standing, stood up with a low growl.

"Fire !" cried the trapper.

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In his excitement Ruxton sighted too low, and the bullet that ought to have slain the beast, had he remained crouching, passed harmlessly under his body. Ruxton hurriedly dropped his gun and picked up the Irishman's ; as he did so, the pistol overhead exploded, followed by an imprecation from the trapper. His foot had slipped, and in saving himself he had inadvertently touched the trigger.

Ruxton cocked the second gun, but, as the hammer clicked back, the cinnamon-coloured body of the puma shot down at him slantways like an enormous arrow ; he pulled the trigger, but the bullet went anywhere except into the animal's body ; and the next thing he knew was that he was lying on his back with the awful hooked claws of the puma's hind-feet cutting their way through his moccasins into his shins.

Ruxton shut his eyes, and opened them again, feeling that it must all be a dream ; but the sudden pressure of one of the fore-paws on his breast, and then a pain there as though the place had been seared with a hot iron, assured him that it was a most horrible reality. The flaming eyes of the beast glared threateningly down into his, and he felt that his last moment had come. But life is never so dear to a man as when he is nearest to losing it, and, regardless of the teeth that snapped and flashed in his face, the prostrate man raised both hands to grip the "painter's" throat. He succeeded so well that a terrific roar from the brute was stifled at the outset. This enabled him to hear a shout of encouragement from his fellow-hunter ; but at that moment the voice sounded as though it came from miles away.

But of impressions nearer at hand he was most pain-

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ully conscious ; there was not a movement of the brute's body that did not bring torturing agony with it ; he could even find time to notice that many of the puma's teeth seemed to be broken or missing. Exerting all his force, he tightened his grip, and experienced a savage satisfaction as he felt the hot, muscular throat yield to his nervous grasp. If he could maintain his hold for another minute he would have conquered the beast unaided.

But even while he made this triumphant reflection the pain of his chest increased to such a degree that he involuntarily cried out ; and while a sweat of exhaustion started from every pore of his skin, the puma's second fore-foot, which had been on the ground hitherto, was lifted on to his shoulder, and by its weight alone seemed to rob him of the power to hold on any longer.

An alert young backwoodsman does not usually take long to reach the ground from a height of twenty feet ; or to cover another thirty, when once he is on the ground, particularly if another man's life is at stake. Tim was almost as active as the puma himself ; yet it seemed hours to both men before he could reach the scene of the combat. A film was creeping over Ruxton's eyes, and he felt his fingers relaxing their grasp ; he struggled to make it good, but in spite of all his efforts the head and neck of the brute were jerked free. And then came a sensation of inexpressible relief, as though a half-ton weight had been lifted off him ; the puma had sprung away from him altogether. Before he had more than realized this, the Irishman's voice sounded close by his ear : " No, you don't, my friend " ; there was a sound as if the trapper had struck something with his fist, and then a muffled growl.

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Ruxton sat up with pain and difficulty ; close beside him the puma lay dead, with the haft of a bowie-knife protruding from the back of his neck.

“ You stuck to him like a Briton, and good luck to you ! ” shouted the delighted Irishman. “ But you should have hit him instead of holding him, and he’d have run away. He was off the moment he heard me coming ; only I happened to be a little too near.”

“ Why didn’t you come before ? What made you so long ? ” asked Ruxton wearily.

The trapper replied indirectly : “ A grisly had me cornered once ; and though my finger was on the trigger, it took me half an hour to pull it ; yet the other fellows swore it was all over in two seconds.”

The good-hearted fellow then dressed the Englishman’s wounds, and lifting him on to his back, cheerfully tramped the three miles home to their camp.

The puma is often hunted with dog and gun, particularly in South America ; and Lieutenant Brand, R.N., tells us that it is exceedingly good sport. He took part in many such hunts while spending a holiday in Brazil, and found them almost as interesting as African leopard-shooting. The plan was to let the dogs turn out the beast and chase him, in which case he would take to a tree. Being the coward that he probably is, the puma would not, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, turn on the dogs, but would make for the nearest refuge with as much assiduity as a cat chased by a terrier, and stay there till he was shot by the hunters. Certainly he would not have stood much chance against the dogs, for those used by the Gauchos for this sport are a small but particularly savage breed, known as *leoneros*, something

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like our whippets, and having all the activity and perseverance of ferrets.

But in the hundredth case, either the puma would turn, or there would be no tree handy; in the latter event the beast would endeavour to find shelter in a hole or cave, or else run *amok* through the dogs, and make a dash for the sportsmen themselves. The latter happened once when Mr. Brand had joined a Gaucho hunting-party; the puma rushed through and outran the dogs, and seemed quite ready to attack their masters. Brand was going to shoot, but a Gaucho laughingly recommended him not to waste his powder; and, with a careless swing of his arm, sent his bolas (three metal balls, each fastened to a leather thong, the thongs all being joined at one end) straight at the beast. It took him round the neck; he fell down choking, and the dogs quickly put an end to his struggles.

Seeing so many tame pumas in the huts of the Gauchos made Brand desire to possess one, and he offered one of these fellows a good sum for his pet. But the Gaucho shook his head. "My wife and children would never forgive me," he said. "But get on your horse and come with me; there have been several about here lately, as my cattle know to their cost. I'll try and catch a young one for you."

They rode a mile or two across the pampas, accompanied by a couple of dogs, and eventually these started a full-grown puma from a cave.

"But he's too big to tame, surely," objected the Englishman.

"We catch and tame them both in one," said the Gaucho, grinning, and unhitching his lasso.



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“ But how if he bites or scratches ? ”

“ Trim his claws and file his teeth.—There you are ! ”

Without checking his horse, the Gaucho sent his lasso whistling through the air ; it fell over the puma's head, and pulled him up sharply in mid-career.

“ *This* will tame him, señor,” shouted the Gaucho. His horse swerved round suddenly, and galloped in the opposite direction, dragging the unfortunate puma along the ground after him at a frightful rate. But such “ sport ” was not likely to appeal to an English gentleman, and Brand rode away disgusted.

The Gauchos serve the jaguar in exactly the same way, but they continue their ride till the beast is dead. If there be any palliation for this cruelty—apart from their knowing no better—it lies in the fact that the beast, when he takes it into his head to leave the forest, will slay every head of cattle that he can get near. By nature he cleaves as much to the forest as the tiger to the jungle ; but, like the tiger, if he once acquires the habit of visiting stock-yards or villages, nothing but a bullet, or something similar, will break him of it.

Most South Americans call him the tiger (*tigre*), though he is more like a heavily-built leopard ; for his size he is stronger even than the lion, and is probably the most intelligent and rational of any of the *Felidæ*. He is undaunted by any animal—except, perhaps, a herd of pecaries ; he will attack man if he is annoyed or hungry, and will even slay the terrible caiman, the huge alligator of the West. As long as he remains in the forest and near a big river, he will leave man and his property alone, for he has an abundance of other provisions : fish, monkeys, lizards, turtle-eggs, etc.

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Lieutenant Brand spent two nights watching for one of these brutes that had abandoned the forest and taken to cattle-lifting. On the first night the beast had an appointment elsewhere ; but, on the second, he turned up, though not without keeping the hunter waiting till he was numbed with cold and more than half asleep. Brand had taken up a position against the fence of a compound where some young wild horses were confined, from which he would have a good view over the plain ; and at last his patience was rewarded, for, peeping round the angle, he saw by the light of the moon a large jaguar coming towards the compound at a confident little trot.

The Englishman's gun was loaded in both barrels, and he allowed the beast to come within fairly short range before he fired. At the first bullet the jaguar growled ; at the second he dropped, and the young sailor delightedly started forward to examine his prize. Two steps, however, in that direction, were quite enough for him, seeing that his gun had not yet been reloaded ; for the jaguar had come to life again, and, as though no bullet had ever touched him, was already coming towards the Lieutenant by means of a series of lengthy leaps.

Brand's gun was a muzzle-loader, and he had not yet learned the trick, common enough among the Gauchos and backwoodsmen, of "ramrodless" loading—i.e., of keeping the mouth full of bullets, and spitting one down the barrel on the top of a small handful of loose powder without using a wad of any sort. He did not like the idea of running away, and such a proceeding would hardly profit him, either, against the jaguar's speed, and there was no house within a mile or more ; yet he had no other

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weapon than the empty gun, which there was no possible time to load.

Fortunately for him he was an athlete, and, feeling confident in his activity, he clubbed his gun and awaited the arrival of the jaguar, prepared to step aside when the beast sprang, and get in first blow. The green eyes came nearer ; one more bound would bring their owner to the spot where the Lieutenant was standing. Then a human laugh, followed by an exclamation in Spanish, sounded from the farther angle of the compound ; at the same time there was a peculiar whistling in the air, and as the jaguar was about to spring, he fell back roaring faintly, and lay rolling and writhing.

“ I'd got my gun loaded, and then found I had no caps,” cried an elderly Gaucho, as he walked quickly towards the Englishman. “ I had fallen asleep in the compound, and your shots waked me ; I think my bolas has finished him ; if not, this will,” and he drew his knife.

The two walked to where the jaguar lay ; he was bleeding profusely from the two bullet-wounds and was just drawing his last breath. Brand had only once before seen the result of a bolas-throw, and he was not a little startled ; the thong had cut quite a valley in the thick hide of the animal's body ; had it caught him in the neck it must have killed him independently of the bullet-wounds.

It has been stated in another chapter that Lieutenant Gibbon, U.S.N., was forced to spend many nights in a hammock slung from the trees on the bank of the Amazon. During that time he was able to watch the jaguar as well as the monkeys ; sometimes both beasts at once. One night he shot a jaguar while that animal

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was occupied in a most extraordinary manner. Gibbon had been awakened by a loud roaring, and, as he always slept with a gun as his hammock-fellow, he sat up and took aim at a jaguar that was but fifteen yards away, and with his back half turned to the explorer. For some time Mr. Gibbon could not make out what the beast was doing, for the fire had died out ; in the faint moonlight he seemed to be digging his paw repeatedly into the ground and raising it again to lick it, like a bear eating honey.

At the click of the gun-hammer he raised his head, thus offering an excellent mark to the bullet, which killed him instantly. In the morning Gibbon found that the beast had captured a good-sized turtle, had turned the reptile over on its back, and, having torn away the small soft part of the under-shell, had been neatly ripping out the meat with his paw. But perhaps this is no more striking than his method of killing deer or cattle : springing on the creature's back, he maintains his hold with his hind claws, says Mr. Gibbon, and, placing one fore-paw on the victim's head, grasps the muzzle with the other ; then gives a sharp, deft wrench to the head, which instantly dislocates the neck-vertebræ, and kills the animal painlessly.

The time came when the Lieutenant determined to abandon his hammock and sleep on the ground, when the boat was impracticable ; the cause of this resolution was as follows. On most mornings he was awakened at sunrise by the choruses of the howling monkeys ; but one day their noise began before the usual time, though, on looking upwards, he was unable to divine the cause of their early rising. There was not a single monkey of any sort in his tree, but excited howls came from every other one



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near at hand. But suddenly he felt the bough to which his hammock ropes were fastened rocking, and saw to his horror that a jaguar was occupying the bough, and looking savagely down at him.

What had probably happened was this. The monkey next to turtle-eggs, is his favourite food. During the night he stands little chance of such a meal, for the monkeys, aware of his propensities, seek the slender branches, and even then "sleep with one eye open." But when daylight is going, or just appearing, they are less on their guard, and then he sometimes makes quite a haul. Gibbon once saw a jaguar strike down four fleeing monkeys, one after the other, with his paw, so rapid are his movements. This morning the brute had no doubt been disappointed; the monkeys had escaped and he was still hungry. Moreover, judging from his particularly vicious expression, it would seem that he associated the young explorer with this disappointment.

Gibbon stealthily drew his gun nearer, without raising himself or taking his eyes off the animal; but the difficulty was, how was he to take anything like a sure aim before the beast sprang? The mere pointing of the gun would most probably aggravate him into action, and unfortunately there were over many twigs and sticks in the way to balk the aim or turn aside the bullet; and the jaguar wounded would be a thousand times more dangerous than the jaguar whole.

There was just the hope that some of the Indians several of whom had their hammocks on the next tree might have caught sight of the beast; but even then their weapons seemed miserably puny for such work as this. The hope was not without foundation, for Gibbon suddenly





### A HUNGRY JAGUAR

The jaguar being disappointed of a meal of monkeys, inspected Lieutenant Gibbon with a view to substituting him. Gibbon was afraid to move for fear of precipitating matters, but an Indian who saw his danger brought the animal down with an arrow through his breast.



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heard a whistle scarcely louder than a serpent's hiss, and looking straight over his own feet, he saw an Indian sitting up in his hammock with his bow drawn. The native warned him with a look to lie motionless ; then the bow-string twanged, and scarcely had it done so when, with a crash and a half-choked roar, the jaguar fell, his back to the earth, almost into Gibbon's hammock. The American cocked his gun, but the arrow had passed through the beast's breast and blade-bone.

After such an adventure, it is not surprising that Mr. Gibbon determined to change his quarters.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### ADVENTURES WITH PECCARIES AND THE TAPIRS

The peccary.—One of the fiercest beasts in America.—Some objectionable visitors at a rancho.—Besieged.—Picking the enemy off.—A heavy undertaking.—Trying to knock down the fence.—Another leader shot.—An entry to the yard effected.—Reckoning without the veranda.—A slight reinforcement.—The peccaries turning the tables on the shooters.—Up a tree.—A dog killed.—The peccaries driven off.—Fight between jaguar and peccaries.—A terrible thrashing for the jaguar.—His escape.—The American tapir.—Mr. Mathison's attempt to lasso one.—Dragged along by the tapir.—A horrible death in view.—The horse down.—Just in time.—The proper way to lasso a tapir.

THE ordinary "wild pig" of America is, again, the descendant of imported animals that have gradually "thrown back" to the savage state of their original ancestors. Nevertheless, the pig tribe is not entirely unknown as a Western product, for it is represented by the peccaries, which are of two sorts: the white-lipped and the collared; the latter is slightly larger, the former being but three feet long and fifteen inches high.

To look at these little creatures one would think them harmless, and as near an approach to prettiness as the hog tribe can produce; yet the planter, the Indian, and the Gaucho have as much wholesome respect for them as for the jaguar. Even one peccary can do as much harm

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with his teeth as the most savage bulldog that ever lived ; and a small herd of them will destroy everything that comes in their way, from a jaguar to a cornfield, and from a man to a chicken. Instead of ripping, as the boar does, they use their teeth, which are large, pointed, and two-edged.

The white-lipped variety is not so generally found as the other, but he is still fairly plentiful in Central America. While establishing the English settlement at Black River, Honduras, Mr. Thomas Young saw rather more of him than he wished, for hundreds of pounds' worth of plantation and growing crops were destroyed, cattle and horses maimed, and poultry devoured, by the mischievous beast and his brethren ; and even human life was not safe while a herd was in the immediate neighbourhood. The settlers tried every means of destroying them—traps, bullets, dogs, etc.—and they succeeded tolerably well so long as they dealt only with the individual, but they were powerless against a number. One of Mr. Young's experiences in trying to drive them from the vicinity of his rancho was amusing, though it might easily have been tragical.

He was all alone in the rancho, his companions and servants being away on a hunting excursion, when a chorus of shrill, abrupt grunts greeted his ears, and he hastened to close the door, knowing how an invasion of the bungalow by these savage porkers would be likely to end. Then he clambered through the window to the top of a rough and very broad veranda, with which the front of the place was ornamented, and, gun in hand, surveyed the would-be besiegers.

Here, at any rate, was a chance to avenge some of the



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recent damage to his property ; the herd was over seventy in number, and knowing something of their habits by this time, Young felt confident that the best way to keep them within range of his gun was to kill one of them : for so clannish is the peccaries' disposition that, if one of their number should be slain or injured, they will strive by every possible means to avenge him. He loaded with large shot, and fired at the nearest rank of the animals, that were poking about on the ground looking for food, or staring sullenly up at him.

One pig fell dead, and two others, badly torn by the shots, seemed as though they had taken leave of their wits, for they ran, squeaking and grunting, right round the whole herd and back to their places again, where they stood stamping, and snapping their teeth at nothing. This teeth-snapping is a common feature of the peccaries, and when it is performed by several at once, as is often the case, it creates an echoing, metallic clatter that can be heard at a great distance.

The nearest animal to the dead peccary was the old boar under whose leadership the herd had no doubt arrived. He dashed up to the carcass, sniffed it, and then seemed to be haranguing his followers in a series of high-pitched grunts. By this time the Englishman had reloaded, and now took the leader as his mark. The beast fell dead, and Young began almost to regret that he had killed him, for it seemed as though the herd would flee now that their state was headless. He quickly loaded and fired again, and two other beasts fell, writhing pitiably, blinded, if not mortally wounded.

But if Young had feared lest his targets should decamp, he saw that apprehension on that score was groundless ;

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he was far more likely to be in case to wish them gone, for a new king arose, and under his guidance the whole party made a mad dash at the pales that fenced off the rancho on every side. They recoiled, shrieking and (if their object was to break down the stockade) unsuccessful, and in the middle of their disorder Young found time to get in another shot ; the pellets fell on the backs of half a dozen of the peccaries, seeming to do but trifling damage ; rather they had the effect of increasing their fury, and they charged a second time, and with greater force than before—though with no better result—at the palings.

Young began to see that he was wasting both time and shot ; if the herd was to be destroyed, it must be by means of bullets, and those carefully aimed. The next assault of the beasts confirmed him in his decision as to a change of tactics, for this time the fence swayed and rattled, and it seemed as though some of the stout poles would be snapped. Without more delay the executioner sent a bullet into the leader, which was on the left wing of the army, and the next charge was rammed down before the other peccaries had finished their dirge over their fallen general.

Another assault was made, this time over the body of the dead leader, and consequently farther to the left, with the unfortunate result that the brunt of it struck the gate instead of the fence, and this, being but lightly fastened, flew open, and the whole herd began to swarm through into the yard. Of course this could scarcely make Young's own position less safe, for no herd of peccaries could beat down the heavy door of the house, and he rather congratulated himself on the enemy's

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coming nearer to his gun. He fired once more into the charging mob, but could not check it, and by the time he had loaded again not a single animal was in view.

Young had reckoned without the veranda. Naturally the beasts had charged at the house-wall, and the moment they reached it they were almost secure from the gun, for the veranda so overhung the ground-floor that only by breaking down a part of the parapet that protected it could the explorer hope to take aim at the animals ; even then he would have to lie in the breach thus made, and direct his barrel under the veranda-floor. While he was revolving various plans, he heard the voices and laughter of two men coming towards the rancho ; two of his friends had returned from their hunting.

“Look out !” he cried, pointing downwards. “Peccaries. Go to the end and fire over the rails.”

The two new arrivals made for the end of the house, and were aghast to see their yard thus invaded, for both knew the savage nature of the beasts.

“It looks like having to kill the whole herd,” shouted Young. “I can’t persuade the brutes to move.”

The two men began a desultory firing, without very much heart to their work ; for the peccaries at first had not the sense to run out of the gateway by which they had entered, and the whole performance seemed uncomfortably like firing into a pigsty and calling it “sport.” It was, moreover, a useless waste of life, for no European can eat peccary-pork unless a gland in the neck is removed before the carcass has stiffened, and the only result of such carnage would be to bring round the rancho all the vultures and wild dogs within miles.

But the tables were to be turned on the slaughterers

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before long. By the time five of the peccaries had been killed the herd had discovered the way out, and, tired of trying to beat down the palisade to get at the shooters, they swept through the gateway in pursuit of them. One of the men sprang back and swarmed up the nearest tree ; the other vaulted the rails into the yard, only to find half the peccaries wheel back like lightning in chase of him. Luckily for him, he was near one of the stanchions that supported the veranda, and, being young and active, he soon succeeded in climbing out of reach of their teeth.

But the position was still awkward enough ; the man in the tree had exhausted all his ammunition, and the pigs could easily get under cover from the veranda-firing. For another quarter of an hour the men awaited patiently the arrival of their friends, hoping devoutly that they would return in a body, in which case their number would most likely frighten away the invaders.

At last their hopes were realized, for six white men and as many Indians were seen making their way among the trees, accompanied by two or three dogs. One of the latter, at sight of the peccaries, made a dash at them ; but the poor beast was bitten to death before a gun could be fired. However, on seeing so large a reinforcement, the new leader of the herd trotted away uttering peculiar grunts, and, after a moment's hesitation, the rest followed him, and all disappeared, leaving the hunters once more masters of their own home.

Lieutenant Gibbon once saw a jaguar treated with almost as little mercy by the peccaries as the dog just mentioned. The jaguar, cross and hungry, was perched in a tree near the spot where the explorer's canoe was passing when a peccary-boar came grunting by. Down



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sprang the jaguar, and, as he fell, the boar raised his voice in a grunt and a scream, which were soon silenced by the powerful paws that now held his head between them. Almost before the breath had gone from the victim's body a score of his relatives had charged from among the bushes and surrounded the murderer.

Gibbon whispered to the Indians to stop, and prepared to watch the fun. Snarling angrily, the jaguar looked up from his contemplated meal, and as one of the peccaries advanced, struck at him with his paw ; but, swift though the movement was, the plucky little beast dodged it and administered a sharp bite on the other fore-leg. This was the signal for hostilities to begin in earnest. One and all, the peccaries closed on their tribe's enemy, and drove their lancet-like teeth into all parts of his body, snapping at his paws whenever they were raised to strike, and hanging on to his haunches every time he endeavoured to leap into the tree above.

But in the end superior intelligence was to carry the day. Some naturalists explain away the courage of the peccary by attributing it to sheer thick-headedness and mental inability to apprehend the idea of danger. Be that as it may, the poor jaguar deserved credit for his escape from such a one-sided contest. Trusting in his power of sudden movement, he all at once rose about four feet in the air, and, disregarding the bites that saluted his paws as they alighted again on the ground or on the backs of his closely-packed opponents, summoned all his strength for one long bound which should take him clean off the bank into the river. After one or two feints with teeth and fore-paws, he took the projected leap, landing in the water close to the boat.





### JAGUAR ATTACKED BY PECCARIES

These savage little animals seem to be absolutely fearless, and hesitate to attack nothing, whether human being or ferocious beast of prey. In this case a jaguar has killed one of their number, and the infuriated relatives rush to avenge his death. They crowd round the jaguar and bite him all over with their razor-like teeth. He can only save himself by bounding suddenly and repeatedly straight up in the air, only to be fastened upon directly he alights. At last, after several feints, he leaps over their backs into the river and so escapes.



## AND THE TAPIRS

"No, no ; fair play's a jewel. Let him go, poor old beggar," said the explorer, with a shake of the head, as an Indian dropped his paddle and picked up a bow.

The herd of peccaries instinctively jumped into the water in pursuit, but soon abandoned it, aware, when they came to reflect, that in the water they would be powerless against the jaguar.

No very distant relative of the pig tribe is the tapir, the nearest approach to the elephant that the West can boast. Strong family resemblance can also be seen in him to the horse—in the shape of the ears, neck, and saddle, as well as in the stiff, short mane that looks as if it had been clipped. Special interest attaches to this beast on account of his having a brother in the other hemisphere, a rare thing among the American fauna.

Mr. George Mathison tried on many occasions to hunt the tapir in South America, and with varying success. Having learned among the Gauchos the art of lassoing wild horses and cattle, he saw no reason why he should not put his newly acquired knowledge into practice on the scarcer beast ; and when, travelling northwards, he heard that lassoing was the mode of tapir-catching in vogue among the Indians, he decided to seize the first opportunity of indulging in the sport.

Riding alone through the Brazilian selvas one evening, near the bank of the Amazon, he started the first tapir he had ever seen, a long-snouted and not particularly pretty animal, no bigger than a donkey, though of sturdier build. Mr. Mathison soon chased him on to more open ground, and, as they neared the river, threw

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his lasso, the other end of which was fastened to his saddle in the orthodox Gaucho fashion. It was with no little pride that he saw his first attempt a complete success ; the loop dropped as accurately as if it had been thrown by the most experienced cow-catcher ; the thong ran taut, and he took a long breath to prepare him for the struggle which always came where a horse or bull was concerned, and might be looked for even in the smaller animal. The tapir turned his head, summed up his captor in a quick, supercilious glance, then looked ahead to where the river lay gleaming through the creepers and trees and shrubs.

The next thing Mathison knew was that he and his horse were being dragged along, willy-nilly, at express speed towards the water. Already his face was streaming with blood from its sudden contact with the lianas, and his frightened beast, powerless to resist, threatened at every moment to fall with his rider under him.

Letting go his bridle, and trusting to his being able to manage the horse with his feet and knees, Mathison attempted to haul on the lasso with both hands. He might as well have tried to haul up a sperm-whale in mid-career ; the tapir seemed to have the strength of an elephant, and Mathison's efforts at pulling the lasso only ended in adding to the likelihood of the horse's being dragged off his feet.

On they sped, and at last got clear of trees and bushes, and on to the grassy space that, just there, overhung the water. The Englishman had heard it said that, when he finds himself ridden by a jaguar, the tapir invariably makes for the nearest water, in the hope of being able to dive, and so get rid of his incubus ; and now it looked very

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such as if this particular beast were going to treat his captor or captive in that very way.

Mathison determined that, come what might, he would cling on, although the sight of the river, with its caimans and other abominations, reminded him that this neighbourhood was not inviting at evening. There came a sudden splash and jerk : the tapir had plunged in. The pulling was now even stronger than before, and, resisting with all his might at sight of the threatening water, the terrified horse stumbled and fell sideways ; happily the rider's horsemanship was equal to the occasion, and he was on his feet by the time the animal's flank touched the ground.

There was only one thing to be done now ; he could not see the poor beast dragged in torture over the ground to the river, there to make a meal for alligators or jaguars. He hastily cut the lasso, and the victorious tapir got away.

That night Mathison reached an Indian village close at hand, where he was hospitably received. One of the natives surveyed his tired horse, examined the cut end of the lasso, and remarked in Spanish : " The señor has been tapir-hunting ? "

Mathison nodded ruefully.

" Not by yourself ? "

" Yes. "

The Indian was much too polite to laugh in his face, but, after a lengthy pause, he said, with twinkling eye : " You must be a good horseman, señor. It usually requires four Indians to catch a tapir ; even then they dare not make the lasso fast to the girth, for fear of an accident. "



## CHAPTER XXVIII

### WILD DOGS AND WILD CATS OF THE WEST

True and spurious wild dogs.—Newfoundland and Eskimo dogs.—The Indian dog.—Killing a coyote.—A pack of Indian dogs on the scent.—As bad as a pack of wolves.—Surrounded.—Putting them to the right-about.—Flight.—An unpleasant awakening.—More dogs.—Between dogs and Indians.—Advantage of knowing Indian dialects.—A wonderful sheep-dog.—Wolf-dogs and fox-dogs.—A scientific fox.—How Darwin dealt with him.—The American wild cat.—The yagouarondi.—Mr. Young's adventure.—The wild cat's mysterious behaviour.—Convulsions.—And their cause.—An extraordinary escape.—The ocelot.—Chased by an ocelot while bathing.—A gloomy prospect.—Saved by a half-wild dog.—A plucky beast.

BOTH of these families may be subdivided into two groups—aborigines, and the descendants of tame importations. Among the Western *Canidæ*, the Eskimo dog, the Newfoundland, the coyote or prairie wolf, together with various fox-like and wolf-like creatures of extreme South America, are indigenous ; while the Cuban mastiff, Indian wild dog, etc., have sprung from animals that, having escaped from the collar, have refused to return to it. That interesting little beast, the " prairie dog," is not a dog at all, but one of the rodents.

The Newfoundlands and Eskimos might be further subdivided into those which have never known servitude,

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and those which are only wild while they are not wanted by their owners, and are turned loose for part of the year like so many ponies. Lieutenant Hardy, R.A., says of the Newfoundland pretty much what Captain Parry has said of the Eskimo dog : that in a purely wild state he is inoffensive, and makes a scanty but honest living on fish, or on small animals that no one but the trapper feels the loss of. But the half-wild dogs of both species are dangerous alike to man and cattle, for domestication (*alias* ill-usage, in this case) has spoiled their tempers, and the semi-starvation which they undergo while "on duty" makes savage thieves of them the moment they are free.

The Eskimo is a brute to his dog, and brings him into subjection by means of tortures that ought to get the little man penal servitude ; the result is that, when the poor dog is turned loose, he will kill and eat his own brethren, and will sometimes attack the traveller with even more pertinacity than the wolf. The domesticated Newfoundland, Mr. Hardy tells us, is forced all the winter long to draw sledges of timber, and is half-starved by his master ; in summer, therefore, he avenges himself by devouring sheep whenever they come his way.

But the prairies and backwoods produce even fiercer and (in that they combine in packs) more dangerous creatures in the white "Indian" dog, and sometimes in the coyote, which is a small wolf. Of both of these Mr. Lord made a careful study, though, if some of the Indian dogs had had their way, he would never have lived to write his experiences of them. He shows that these Indian dogs are not American at all, but Chinese, or possibly even Thibetan, though one can only

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conjecture as to the circumstances under which they settled down in their present home.

Riding alone through the Oregon forest on his way south, Lord had just shot a young doe to supply food for the evening and next day, and was dismounting to examine and skin the game, when a coyote sprang from the bushes and pounced upon the little carcass. Lord slipped his arm through his bridle, and, standing by the horse's head, gave the coyote the benefit of his second barrel, and laid him dead by the side of the doe. Then, having secured his venison, he tied up the horse and began to gather wood for his fire.

He had not been occupied thus many minutes before an angry baying sound, much louder and fuller than that of coyotes, fell on his ear ; and as he paused in his task, the noise swelled to well nigh twice its volume, and seemed almost as if it came from behind the next bush. There was no mistaking it : it was the barking of a large number of wild dogs, running at a tremendous speed on a hot scent, not half a mile away. As the beasts must be coming at the rate of nearly twenty miles an hour, two unpleasant facts were palpable : they were very hungry, and in less than a minute they would be up with him.

The direction from which they were coming was that in which lay the morrow's journey, and Lord was not the man to stir an inch out of his way even for a grisly or a batch of hostile Indians, and he had fought with both in his time. Indeed, at that moment the question of his personal safety did not occur to him, for his mind was occupied with the problem of protecting his horse from the savage hunters, and of taking care that his own supper was not stolen from him meanwhile.

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Hastily he cut off a sufficiency of the raw meat, and bound it in front of his saddle with his other stores, in case flight should after all be necessary ; then, standing with his back to a tree at the horse's head, though not untethering the animal, he awaited, gun in hand, the coming of the noisy pack. They came quite soon enough, running so closely together that, in the half-light, they looked like a great white sheet. Lord sent a couple of bullets into the midst of them, and two of their number dropped. Instead of sweeping on over the bodies of the dead beasts, or just pausing to devour them, as wolves would have done, the dogs stopped, widened out to avoid their fallen brethren, sniffed at them a moment, then moved on slowly to where the doe and coyote had fallen. Here two of them proceeded to lap up the still moist blood, while three or four more engaged themselves with the flesh of the coyote and what remained of the doe ; the rest lurched towards the traveller with that peculiar sneaking, curved gait that one associates with the most worthless type of mongrel.

Lord had no leisure to study their manners and habits just then, but at once expended two shot-cartridges on them, hoping by such a distribution to frighten them into retreat. At the first shot they set up a doleful howl, though no animal dropped ; at the second, one of them got more than his share of the shots in his chest, and fell dead, while two others limped a little farther off. The Englishman could see that, by a rapid manœuvre, he might put their present disordered condition to advantage. He reloaded, slipped the gun-sling over his shoulder, cut the thong that bound his horse, and, vaulting into the saddle, touched the animal with the spur.



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Instantly the dogs set up a dismayed howl, and as the powerful horse bounded through them, toppling two or three of them over, they scattered like frightened sheep—all except one. He, bolder, bigger, or hungrier than the rest, made a tremendous spring, not so much at the rider as at the meat at his saddle-bow; but a blow of Lord's fist knocked him stunned to the ground; then, as a parting gift, the rider again emptied his barrels among the dogs, and disappeared at a rate at which even they could scarcely overtake him.

To a man whose adventurous spirit had led him into a thousand escapades by land and sea, and who had become inured to hunger and cold, thirst and heat, in the Crimean trenches and the Nubian desert, an extra ten-mile ride before supper was nothing; and Lord galloped cheerily on, determined to put a reasonable distance between himself and the dogs, and then to camp for the night. But after a quarter of an hour's ride he called to mind that his horse had borne him many miles that day, and that the best animal in the world cannot carry a sixteen-stone man very far at the gallop at the end of a hard day's work. Reducing his speed to a walk, he listened carefully; but he was to windward of the dogs, and could not hear a sound of them. The forest was now becoming a thicket in which no path was visible; it was growing very dark, and horse and man were desperately hungry. The sight of a little stream, which ran across his route, decided him to go no further, lest he fared worse; and he pulled up at the edge of it for his night's rest.

After a hearty meal he lay back against his saddle, and contemplating the fire, fell asleep. When he awoke,





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Lord sent a couple of charges of shot into the pack, then vaulted into the saddle and dashed through their midst. They all scattered except one huge brute, who made a leap at him ; but Lord, with a vigorous blow of his fist, sent him stunned to the ground.



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it was to find a splashing and a barking ringing in his ears, accompanied by the shrill neighing of his horse, which had been lying a few feet behind him, but was now standing, and kicking in a manner that threatened his master with injury if he did not soon move. The fire had become reduced to a few embers, and the pale light that endeavoured to filter through the trees announced that sunrise was not far off. Lord sprang to his feet, rubbing his eyes ; then snatched up his gun, which, of course, lay ready loaded, this time with ball. Baying and yelping and leaping, a couple of dozen of the large white dogs were scrambling in or out of the water, and making open-mouthed for him and his horse. He looked bewilderedly towards the little pack ; if these were his friends of the previous night, why had they come from the other side of the stream ? But there was no time to think about proving their identity ; the nearest dog was only three feet away, and several more were hard on his heels. A sudden kick sent his nearest persecutor backwards, and a bullet killed the next one.

But the moment the gun-report sounded, a peculiar whistle came from a hundred yards the other side of the stream ; and, as though in obedience to it, every dog stood still, looked questionably over his shoulder, and, at a repetition of it, leapt back into the water, and, on reaching the other bank, soon disappeared among the thick bushes. Nevertheless, if Lord was disposed to congratulate himself on escaping from annoyance or danger, he was somewhat premature ; for, as the last dog vanished, a dozen Indians stole into view, and stood, bow in hand, watching him across the stream. In the still faint light he could not see whether their demeanour

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was peaceable or the reverse ; but as soon as they began to mutter among themselves, his intimate knowledge of their dialect told him that the Indians were very much disposed to be uncivil.

A few brief explanations shouted by him across the stream soon put an end to that unpleasant possibility ; and the simple Indians, astonished that a stranger should speak their language, and apparently know all about them and their tribe, were very ready to fraternize. The dogs which had awakened Lord had, of course, nothing to do with the entirely wild creatures that had attacked him on the previous evening, but were a half-wild pack which the natives occasionally used in their hunts, for one of which they had been bound when they encountered the Englishman.

In South America, packs of wild dogs, very much like collies, were at one time common—again the descendants of immigrant beasts. These the Gauchos would lasso and tame, and the pups that were born in captivity were trained into being far better sheep-dogs than our own country has ever produced. Darwin many times saw a large flock of sheep miles away from any human habitation, guarded by no other shepherd than one of these trained dogs. Contrary to custom, domestication seemed to inculcate courage rather than stamp it out of them ; for though they would generally flee from the ordinary tame dog, one of them would put to flight a whole pack of wild ones that generally hung about the fold seeking whom they might devour. Unbidden, the shepherd-dog would collect his flock at the same time every night, and, keeping them all together, would march them back to the *estancia* or farm. When he had delivered up his charge,

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he would present himself at the house to receive his rations ; then his wild instinct generally came out, for, the moment the meat was given to him, he fled at top speed to the woods or the pampas with it, fearful of attack from other dogs that came of a more civilized strain.

In Darwin's time, wolves or wolf-dogs were common enough in the Falkland Islands ; and in the island of San Pedro, off Chile, the great scientist also saw a kind of fox which he called *Canis fulvipes*. Even at that date (1834) the animal was very rare, and has probably become extinct long ago ; but there is a stuffed specimen at Kensington which Darwin killed in a manner that would have astonished British sportsmen, and, still more, British foxes. The ship had cast anchor, and two officers went ashore to make mathematical observations ; and Darwin, accompanying them, soon set to work to look for zoological or other specimens. On turning towards where his two friends had stationed themselves, he was amazed to see a strange-looking, bushy-tailed dog standing behind the two officers, evidently engrossed in watching their operations.

There is no encouragement, unless you are an absolutely infallible shot, to fire at an animal when a friend's body is acting as background for it ; yet here was one of the rarest animals in the world within a few paces of the enthusiastic young naturalist—a chance, in fact, of a lifetime. Suddenly forming a desperate resolution, Darwin snatched his geological hammer out of his pocket, and stole like a shadow across the few yards of rock that separated them. The animal, “ more curious, or more scientific, but less wise, than the generality of his



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brethren," still remained absorbed in contemplating the unconscious men and their theodolite ; and, feeling rather like a footpad or a garrotter, the scientist dealt the poor fox a blow on the head with his hammer which extinguished his mathematical aspirations for ever.

The American wild cat is for the most part genuinely wild, though there are families of "escaped " cats still common on the pampas. In the Far North we have the lynx ; a little lower, the prairie cat ; and then, from Mexico to Cape Horn, a score of similar creatures, all more or less beautifully marked, all more, rather than less, savage, all closely related to the jaguar or the puma, and varying in size from that of the household cat to that of a small leopard. Of the Central American cats, the most interesting is the yagouarondi, a beast nearly as large as the puma, and one that, even if it do not covet human food, is a savage and objectionable neighbour. It should be borne in mind that animals like this carry as much danger in their claws as in their teeth ; and if one had to choose, the quick death from the teeth of lion or tiger would be preferable to the horrors of lock-jaw, or a lingering death from blood-poisoning, which so often follows laceration by the claws of any of the large *Felidæ*. The yagouarondi is subject to fits of irritation, during which he will " fly " at the first comer and claw him unmercifully.

Mr. Thomas Young had some experience of hunting these fierce cats, and witnessed the death of one of them under peculiar circumstances. Very soon after his arrival in Honduras, he was out by himself hoping to shoot a dinner for his company, and found, to his gratification, that a large number of rather fine rabbits were in the neigh-

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bourhood, so that he would not need to penetrate to the deeper and less inviting shades of the forest.

He had bagged half a dozen of these, when, tired and heated, he sat down for a while. Presently another rabbit scuttled past him, and, as Young had not yet re-loaded, got away from one cruel fate only to run into another. Determined not to court disaster, Young had sat down in the open as far from the trees as possible, and he now began to congratulate himself on his foresight, for suddenly a creature, which he at first took for a small black puma, sprang from a low bough of the tree nearest to him, and in three bounds had seized and killed the rabbit, and, growling savagely, began to demolish the little carcass.

Young was so interested in watching his new acquaintance that he quite forgot to put a fresh cartridge in his gun, till the yagouarondi—for such the stranger was—gave a yawn of satisfaction and turned to move in his direction. Till now he had never shot anything more savage than an English hare, and the sight of this ferocious-looking object put him on his mettle ; he hastily loaded, and waited for the beast to come a little nearer. But as the yagouarondi approached, he liked the look of him less and less. Suppose he should miss his aim, or only slightly wound him !

With his heart beating with excitement, the young fellow covered the animal's throat ; but just then there arose a most appalling yell from the wild cat, which would have terrorized a man of weaker nerve ; then he made a bound in the air, but, instead of falling forward, dropped in his tracks again, then rolled over, spitting and spluttering and writhing. Young advanced slowly and cautiously,

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his finger still on the trigger, and had come within four yards of the yagouarondi when the latter gave a howl like that of a tame cat multiplied by forty, then was completely convulsed, and in another minute lay dead.

Young picked up the stiff, heavy body, and, slinging it over his shoulder, tramped back to his camp. At sight of the rabbits, his English friends gave a cheer; but as soon as one of the Indian servants appeared on the scene he crossed himself and shrieked out in horror. The rabbits were poisonous, and the Englishmen would inevitably have shared the fate of the yagouarondi if they had tasted them. The Indian explained that, for three months of the year, the rabbits fed on berries, harmless to themselves, but deadly to most other animals. Often, he said, a dog was killed through touching one of them, and occasionally even a yagouarondi or a puma.

The most ornamental and, next to the yagouarondi, the largest and fiercest, of the Western cats is the ocelot. This magnificent creature swims like a jaguar, catches fish most dexterously, and, out of curiosity or malice, has no objection to digging his huge claws into a man upon occasion. While Lieutenant Herndon was exploring one of the tributaries of the Amazon, he once came closer to an ocelot than most people would desire. For some days he had noticed the entire absence of alligators along this tributary, and being, like most Anglo-Saxons, a water-loving animal himself, he eagerly seized the opportunity for a bathe.

After he had swum to the far bank, he was returning in a leisurely fashion to where his clothes lay, when he was unpleasantly aware that he was not alone in the water : a

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full-grown ocelot, more than three feet long, was swimming down the stream as though with the intention of cutting him off from return to the bank. Visions of the remorseless claws rending his naked flesh rose before him, and he struck out for land with all his strength, shouting lustily at the same time to awaken his Indians, who were asleep either in the boat or on the grass. But he soon found that he had no breath to spare for shouting if he was to race or dodge this terrible enemy. His state of utter helplessness can well be appreciated by any swimmer who has tried to throw a stick or hit a ball any distance while in the water. He might possibly get in one or two fairly heavy blows with his fist, but half their ordinary impetus would be wanting; and if the beast mounted on his back, which was more than likely, he must choose between drowning and carrying ashore about fifty-six pounds' weight that maintained its equilibrium by the ingenious method of hanging on to the bearer's flesh.

Herndon gave another desperate shout, but it neither frightened the ocelot nor awakened the slumbering Indians. But an unlooked-for ally was at hand. Suddenly there was a splash near the bank for which he was making, and a huge, yellow, half-wild dog, which was a great pet among the Indians, dived into the stream and swam in a straight line for the interloper.

The Lieutenant paused for breath, having still some little doubt as to how a combat between these two might go; clearly the ocelot did not shirk it, for, scenting the dog, he turned and waited for him with a succession of savage snarls. But if the man lost half his force in the water, so did he; the terrible power of springing, on which all the *Felidæ* naturally rely, was gone from him now, and

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he could only await the coming attack with teeth and claws ready for action at close quarters.

But the dog was unceremonious to the last degree, and evidently had no time to spare for fighting. Within twelve inches of the ocelot's head he opened his great jaws, took a sudden sideward stroke that left him clear of his opponent's fore-paws, and the next moment his teeth had closed on the neck of the savage cat, which he seemed to kill as easily as a terrier does a rat. It should be added that the same dog subsequently killed, in a similar manner, a jaguar that had taken to water.

THE END















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